Public warned of high surf, rip current. PAGE 2
CUC's FAC remains the same in October. PAGE 6

$1

Hafa Adai!

# Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 193

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MARK RABAGO

**OPEN WATER SWIM**

Young swimmers line up for the 50-meter race of Saipan Swim Club's final Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series held last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe. Older swimmers served as barriers on the side and egged the younger swimmers on during the competition. ***See story on Page 19.***

**AT THE END OF THE DAY**

## 'Patients have to be sent'

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

"At the end of the day, we need to send our patients off-island."

That was Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' response when asked about a recent Office of the Public Auditor's report that showed that the CNMI Medical Referral Services Office overspent by $27 million from fiscal years 2018 to 2019.

**RELATED NEWS**

➤ OPA: MRSO lacks controls over contracts, vendor agreements. PAGE 5

Torres said Monday that some may blame his administration and/or the Legislature for this over-expenditure, but at its core, those that need to pursue off-island healthcare need to be taken care of.

He hopes, though, that in the near future, the CNMI's

See PATIENTS on Page 4

## 'Torres had raised concern about high water use'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» CUC returned to Finance $90,000 paid for governor's residence

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Gary P. Camacho testified Monday before the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee that Gov. Ralph DLG Torres himself called him in November 2019 and raised a concern about the high volume of water use at his As Teo property.

Camacho said this led to CUC's inspection if there is a water leak and the subsequent installation of a separate water meter to the piggery, which is located in the same As Teo estate. The governor's brother, Jack Torres, owns the piggery.

Torres

Also, after reviewing Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' billing,

See TORRES on Page 4

## A 'historic' 1st for CNMI

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Having a full-time, permanent Veterans Benefits counselor for the CNMI is a historic

See CNMI on Page 4

**COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY**

**LEGEND:**
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

*Source: Office of the Governor*

## AT A GLANCE

As of 7:47pm, Sept. 28, 2021

**VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI**

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **81.9%**

Days since last community transmission: **188**

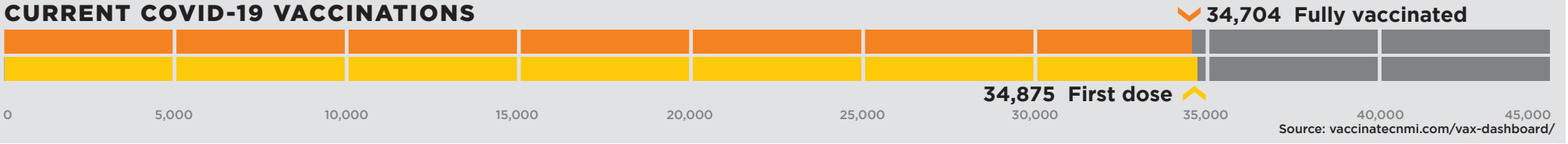
| Pfizer/BioNTech | |
|---|---|
| Initiated: | 30,012 |
| Fully Vaccinated: | 29,267 |
| **Moderna** | |
| Initiated: | 4,863 |
| Fully Vaccinated: | 4,642 |
| **Janssen** | |
| Fully Vaccinated: | 795 |

| GUAM | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 14.536 | 169 | 14,705 |
| Recovered | 11,141 | 8 | 11,149 |
| Active | 3,192 | 169 | 3,361 |
| Deaths | 192 | 3 | 195 |

| SAIPAN | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 267 | 0 | 267 |
| Traced via Travel Screening | 230 | 0 | 230 |
| Traced via Community Screening | 37 | 0 | 37 |
| Deaths | 2 | 0 | 2 |

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

**CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS**




Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

## INSIDE

**LOCAL**

Five nonprofit organizations receive $10,000 checks from the CNMI government.

PAGE 7

**ASIA**

Japan is set to lift all coronavirus emergency measures when they expire later this week

PAGE 13

**LIFE & STYLE**

R. Kelly] is convicted of all nine counts in a sex trafficking trial, including racketeering.

PAGE 15

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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

TIPIYEEW–INAFA'MÅOLIK MARIANAS
LOGO DESIGN
Competition

Guidelines:

1. The contest is open to all Elementary age children
2. The Logo should symbolize both indigenous of the Mariana Islands; Chamorro & Carolinian
3. All entries must be in drawing or digital format
4. Only one entry per participant will be accepted
5. Each entry will have its designated number
6. All participants or entries are invited to the 2021 Tipiyeew-Inafa'måolik Marianas on Saturday, October 2, 2021.
7. Top 5 prizes, First place will receive $500 cash.
8. Decision of the panel of judges with the following criteria is final and incontestable.
9. Winning entry shall become property of the CNMI Government - Tipiyeew-Inafa'måolik Marianas Committee.

**Deadline for submission for both soft and hard copy will be on or before Friday, October 1, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. at the Carolinian Affairs Office, located on Beach Road Garapan west of the Bank of Guam, main branch.**

YOUR ENTRY COULD BE OUR NEXT LOGO!

For Inquiries, please contact Agatha @ 234-6385 or email at agatha.ketebengang@gmail.com.

# Local

## Public warned of high surf, rip current

The CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency warned the public yesterday of dangerous rip currents in north and west facing reefs for Saipan, Tinian, and Rota until 6am Friday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, a high surf advisory is in effect for north and west facing reefs on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota until 6am Friday. There is also a high risk of rip currents until 6am Friday. Large breaking waves of up to 11 feet will be present in the surf zone, creating dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

The public is urged to avoid venturing out toward north and west facing reefs and to swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. ***(PR)***

## Emergency water service interruption in Oleai, parts of Susupe and Chalan Laulau Beach Road

There is currently an emergency water service interruption for customers in the areas of Oleai, portions of Susupe (residents living between Sugar Dock and Texas Road) and portions of Chalan Laulau Beach Road (residents living between Atkins Kroll and the new Bank of Saipan building).

The emergency water interruption is a result of damage to a 6-inch water line caused by the CUC contractor, Hong Ye Construction, according to a Commonwealth Utilities Corp. statement yesterday evening. The CUC statement said that Hong Ye is currently making the necessary repairs and anticipate completion today, Sept. 29, at 6am. "However, please allow an hour or two for water to fully pressurize to the homes," CUC said. Customers should expect restoration of water services soon after.

For the safety of the men and women at the jobsite, motorists are asked to proceed with caution when traveling through the working area as the northbound outer lane fronting Zoom Café in Susupe is currently closed for the repairs.

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates. ***(PR)***

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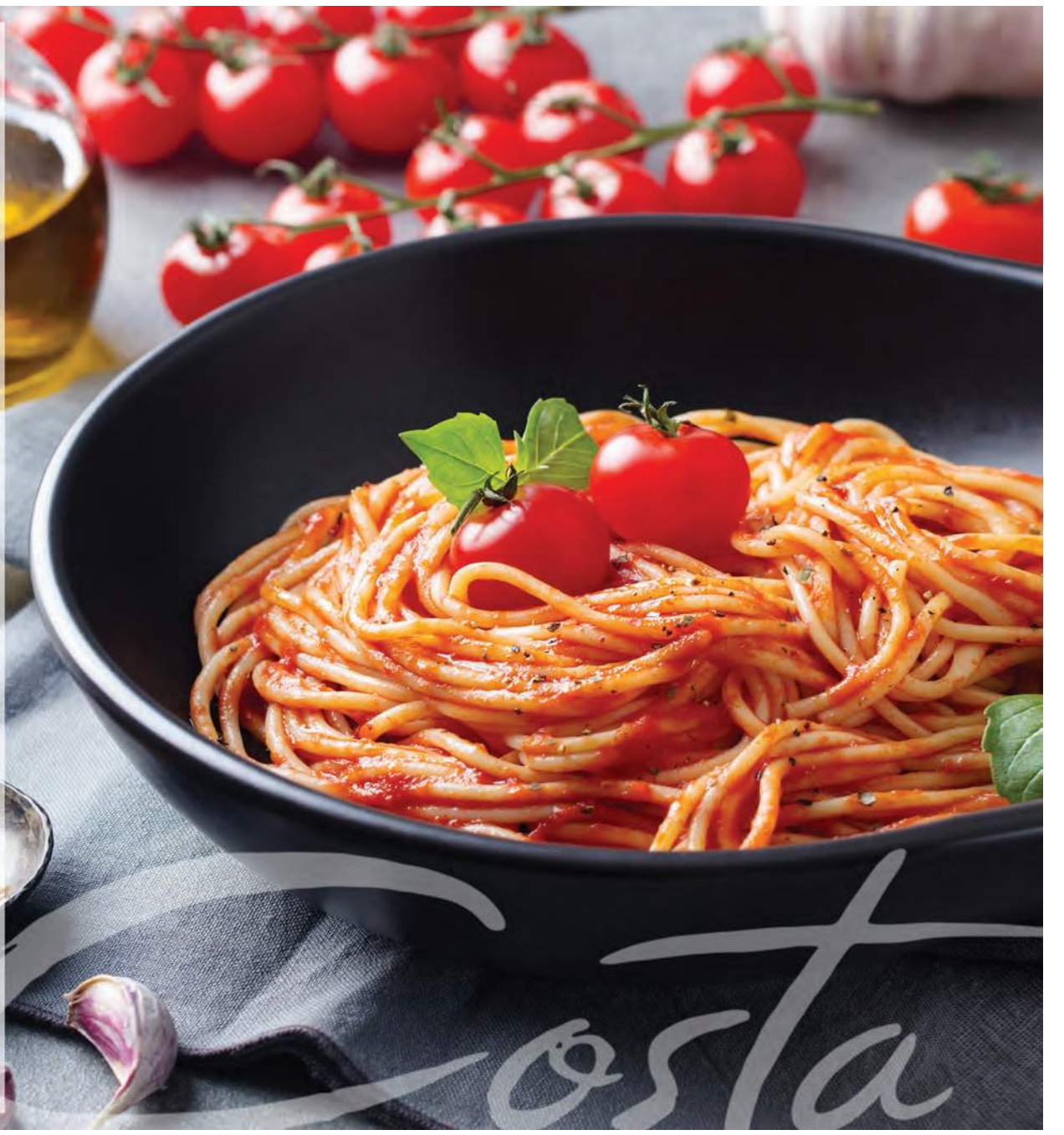


# Babauta resolution slams Japan decision to dump nuclear waste

Rep. Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan) has introduced a joint resolution to condemn Japan's decision to dump nuclear waste into the Pacific Ocean.

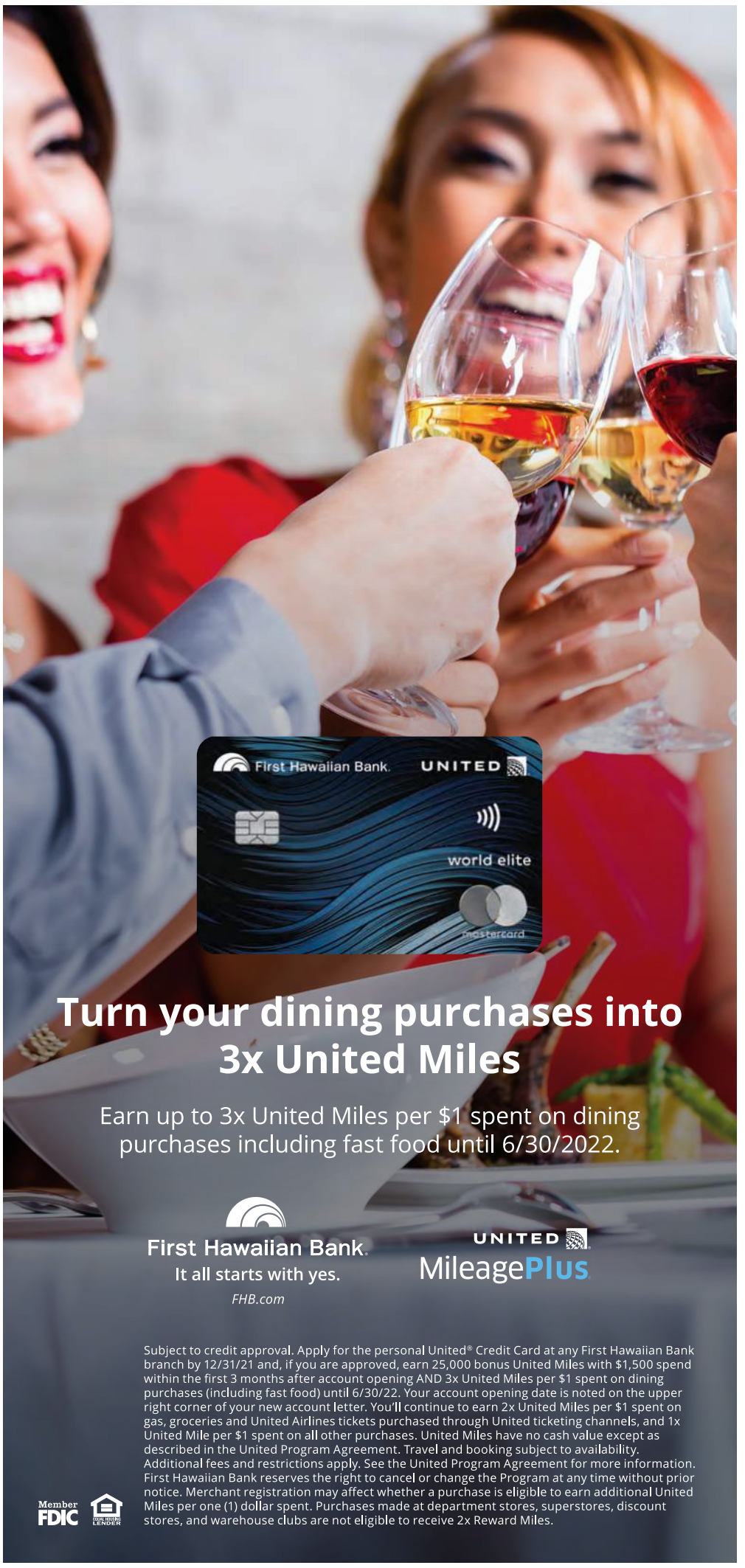
At the House of Representatives regular session Thursday, Babauta, who chairs the House's Natural Resources Committee, said House Joint Resolution 22-11 opposes any other government's actions related to nuclear testing, storage, and waste disposal in the Pacific and reaffirm everyone's fundamental right to a safe and healthy living environment.

Babauta

Japan announced in April a plan to start dumping in two years into the Pacific more than a million tons of treated but still radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear plant, which was destroyed in the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

Babauta's resolution states that the Pacific Ocean is a resource and home for many in the Commonwealth, broader Oceania, and many in Japan who rely on it to provide food, economic subsistence, a

See BABAUTA on Page 4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Subject to credit approval. Apply for the personal United® Credit Card at any First Hawaiian Bank branch by 12/31/21 and, if you are approved, earn 25,000 bonus United Miles with $1,500 spend within the first 3 months after account opening AND 3x United Miles per $1 spent on dining purchases (including fast food) until 6/30/22. Your account opening date is noted on the upper right corner of your new account letter. You'll continue to earn 2x United Miles per $1 spent on gas, groceries and United Airlines tickets purchased through United ticketing channels, and 1x United Mile per $1 spent on all other purchases. United Miles have no cash value except as described in the United Program Agreement. Travel and booking subject to availability. Additional fees and restrictions apply. See the United Program Agreement for more information. First Hawaiian Bank reserves the right to cancel or change the Program at any time without prior notice. Merchant registration may affect whether a purchase is eligible to earn additional United Miles per one (1) dollar spent. Purchases made at department stores, superstores, discount stores, and warehouse clubs are not eligible to receive 2x Reward Miles.
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# One of two involved in robbery denies all charges

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

One of the two defendants allegedly involved in the robbery of two woman in central Garapan over a week ago has pleaded not guilty to all the charges filed against him.

Brandon Lizama Benavente, 37, denied all the allegations and charges against him before Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto Naraja during his arraignment last Monday.

Following the hearing, Benavente was remanded back to Department of Corrections and was ordered to return to court on Oct. 26 for a status conference before Superior Court Associate Judge Theresa Kim-Tenorio.

As for Benavente's co-defendant, Vincent DLG Pua, 29, his hearing was moved to a later date.

The two, who are being charged with robbery, allegedly robbed two women in central Garapan on Sept. 8, 2021.

According to court documents, the two victims had been playing at Club 88 when one of them received a call from a friend at around 9:19pm asking to meet them at a karaoke bar. One of the victims cashed out her winnings of $60 before she and her companion left the establishment.

One of the victims said that, as they were walking toward the karaoke bar, a black sedan that was heading south stopped beside them and a man whose face was covered came out, grabbed her wallet from under her arm before running back into the black sedan and speeding away.

In a statement to the police, Benavente said that, prior to the incident, he saw his friend, Pua, at Club 88 and, when he finished playing, he got up and exited though the back door with Pua following behind him.

Benavente told police that while outside, they saw two Chinese females exit Club 88, one of whom was holding a purse and the other a wallet.

The two defendants decided to rob the women, but Benavente said he changed his mind and told Pua to "just forget about it." Pua allegedly told Benavente that they had to do it.

Benavente admitted that he jumped out of the car, grabbed the woman's wallet, and jumped back into the vehicle. He also said Pua threw the victim's cell phone by the parking lot next to Club 88's back exit door because it began ringing.

In Pua's statement to the police, he said prior to the incident, he arrived at Club 88 and saw Benavente who asked him to follow him to his car.

Pua said when he got into the front passenger seat, Benavente started driving toward Orchid Poker before parking the car.

Pua said Benavente then jumped up from his seat and told Pua to get into the driver's seat and start driving. Pua said they were on Puti Tainobiu Ave. when Benavente jumped out of the car and grabbed something from a woman and jumped back into the car.

## TORRES

*From Page 1*

CUC made an adjustment to his account, after which CUC returned $90,000 to the Department of Finance out of the $99,724 that Finance had paid for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' utility billings on May 25, 2021, Camacho said.

Camacho said $11,000 was transferred out from Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' account to a new account that Jack Torres had established. Camacho said Jack Torres accepted that he will be responsible for the payment of $11,000.

The JGO Committee, chaired by Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), is investigating Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' expenditures of public funds and travels. The committee will continue the hearing today, Wednesday, with Boating Safety official Kevin Aldan as the witness.

At the committee's hearing Monday, Rep. Vicente Camacho (D-Saipan) said that in reviewing Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' CUC utility billings, particularly at the As Teo property, they were stunned to see unusually high volume of water usage over the course of months. He noted as high as 264,000 gallons of water consumed in a single month from March to April 2019. From May to June 2019, the governor consumed 233,000 gallons of water, and from July to August 2019, usage was 186,000 gallons of water.

"The rate of water consumption is astonishing!" Rep. Vicente Camacho (D-Saipan) said.

Gary Camacho agreed with the lawmaker, that it's a large volume of water and that such usage seems excessive.

When asked to whether this water consumption is related to the piggery that's at the site of the governor's As Teo property, Gary Camacho said he is not aware of the piggery operations itself.

In response to the lawmaker's question, Gary Camacho disclosed that Gov. Ralph DLG Torres had communicated to him a concern about the high amount of water use at his property, as well as other utility concerns. Gary Camacho related that he received a call from Gov. Ralph DLG Torres in November 2019 about this.

Gary Camacho said he and Torres stayed in contact through the process of review and assessment to make a determination of what will be his bill and the whole water meter isolation process.

In December 2019, Jack Torres submitted an application for a separate water meter, he said. Gary Camacho said the meter was installed in February 2020 and that from May 2020 forward, Jack Torres has been paying his current billings related to water use for the piggery operations.

When Babauta asked if there is a swimming pool in the governor's As Teo property, Gary Camacho replied he has no such knowledge. As to why the excessive water usage at the governor's residence did not raise a red flag at CUC, Gary Camacho said this was because the bill was never an issue with the Department of Finance, which was the paying party.

Gary Camacho clarified that there was a CUC work order issued to determine the functionality of the water meter at the governor's residence and that, upon their assessment, it was determined that the meter is working fine and that there are no complaints from the paying party.

Rep. Vicente Camacho said the fact that one residence was consuming more water in one month than an entire Public School System consumes in a year should have raise red flags for Gary Camacho or for anyone in CUC. Gary Camacho reiterated that they did send an inspector to review the functionality of the meter and that it was determined to be fine.

He said a separate water meter was eventually installed in February 2020 at the As Teo property involving the piggery and other areas outside of the governor's residence.

He said since the installation of the separate meter, Jack Torres and not the government has been paying the monthly usage for the piggery since May 2020.

He said the meter was installed in February 2020, but there were other works such as internal piping and modification, among other things.

Gary Camacho said what prompted the installation of the new meter under Jack Torres account was due to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' inquiry and his request to separate the billings inside the As Teo property.

Rep. Edwin K. Propst's (D-Saipan) asked that in over all these years that Jack Torres has operated the piggery in the As Teo estate, the total that he owes is $11,000.

"That's correct," Gary Camacho replied.

Gary Camacho said CUC did charge the $99,000 and then Finance issued a check to pay the amount. He said the payment was part of a large check.

Propst showed a graph that indicates that Marianas High School, the biggest high school in the CNMI, the water charge for one year is comparative to one month of water usage for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres at $16,000. "You have admitted that it is excessive. I think everybody can say it's excessive. But why is Jack Torres who owns the piggery paying only $11,000?" Propst asked.

Gary Camacho said its's because the $90,000 was government rate and what Jack Torres is being charged is residential and it's the same volume.

"But it's a different rate, therefore a different total," he said.

Propst said Jack Torres has been responsible for paying for the piggery for the water bill all this time from February 2019 until now and the total amount is $11,000.

"That was the outstanding. Mr. Torres has been paying the monthly usage since May of 2020," Gary Camacho said.

Gary Camacho said Jack Torres is being charged with a residential rate and not commercial because that's what he put in his application.

## PATIENTS

*From Page 1*

patients will be able to receive better healthcare within the CNMI, but said that the current situation calls for patients to seek healthcare off-island.

"It's either you [give] upfront $15 million to the Legislature, or we [have] to go through a deficit. ...We hope that this year and the years coming that we're able to provide better healthcare here for our patients…but at the end of the day, we need to send our patients off-island," said Torres.

When asked if this is a situation where the Legislature has underfunded the medical referral program or if the program itself overspent, Torres said "it goes both ways," adding that some may play the blame game, but reiterated that for the CNMI's patients that need to seek off-island healthcare, their needs must be met. If the program needs to incur more of a deficit, Torres said he is "willing to take that risk."

"We can do the blame gaming. We can blame the administration, 'Why not put $15 million in their budget?'... We can blame the Legislature saying, 'Why are you not prioritizing [the program]?' …I don't want to do name-blaming, [because] at the end of the day our patients that need to be sent [off-island] need to be sent, and if we need to incur more of a deficit I'm willing to take that risk," said Torres.

He said that he has been in close communication with Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña to discuss providing more and better healthcare services for the CNMI's patients.

"I hope through communication with Esther [Muña] that we're able to provide better services here so that medical referral program patients don't have to go off-island. ...If we're able to cut half of [the number of patients that go off-island] in one year, that'll save us in the long run," said Torres.

## CNMI

*From Page 1*

development for the CNMI, according to CNMI Office of Veterans Affairs executive officer Stanley T. Iakopo, who pointed out that this comes at no cost to the CNMI.

This comes soon after it was learned that Willie Peterson III, a legal administrative specialist for the Veterans Benefits Administration under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, had been brought on by the OVA to help the CNMI's veterans by submitting benefits claims directly to the Veterans Benefits Management System, which is the claims management software used by most Veterans Affairs offices to monitor veterans' submitted compensation claims.

Iakopo described Peterson's hiring as a first for the CNMI and added that Peterson's salary comes at no cost to the CNMI. "We're very blessed, and are very grateful for this opportunity for having the first-ever [accredited, full-time Veterans Benefits counselor]. It's [historic]. …He's the first person from federal to render and provide services through filing [veterans] benefits and compensations claims," said Iakopo.

"He is strictly federal, paid by [the federal government]. This is not a cost to the CNMI, and through collaboration and my meetings with the director of the [Veterans Benefits Administration], now we're here," he added.

In May this year, Iakopo met with Honolulu Regional Office of Veterans Affairs director Sergio Chao to discuss the need for the CNMI to have accredited veterans service officers and access to VBMS. Peterson, before arriving in the CNMI, was helping veterans in Hawaii. He was brought here to help the CNMI's veterans partly due to conversations between Iakopo and Chao.

Iakopo said that three of his OVA staff members are now undergoing training to become accredited veterans service officers. He said the three are currently in the initial phases of training and are trained directly by the Honolulu Regional Office of Veterans Affairs in Honolulu, Hawaii. Iakopo said the three are going over a lot of reading material, and they will soon have to take multiple tests on the material.

Before Peterson came here, a Veterans Affair representative from Guam would visit the CNMI from time to time to attend to the needs of the CNMI's veterans.

## BABAUTA

*From Page 3*

means of travel, and so many other aspects of life that can be easily threatened by human activities such as pollution and nuclear exercises.

The lawmaker said the peoples of Oceania have throughout history been disproportionately impacted by foreign powers' nuclear activities within the Pacific region.

This is not the first time this has happened. In 1979, Japan proposed a plan to dump about 10,000 drums of nuclear waste in the Pacific.

Babauta said the Special Rapporteurs from the United Nations released a statement expressing deep disappointment in Japan's latest decision, saying "the release of one million tons of contaminated water into the marine environment imposes considerable risks to the full enjoyment of human rights of concerned populations in and beyond the borders of Japan."

She said the Special Rapporteurs reminded Japan of its international obligations to prevent exposure to hazardous substances, to conduct environmental impact assessments of the risk that the discharge of water may have, to prevent transboundary environmental harms, and to protect the marine environment.

Babauta said the House, the Senate concurring, that the Legislature condemns the Government of Japan's decision to dispose of nuclear waste into the Pacific Ocean. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

# OPA: MRSO lacks controls over contracts, vendor agreements

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Office of the Public Auditor has found that the CNMI Medical Referral Services Office lacks controls pertaining to its contracts and agreements with its vendors, and that MRSO has been using terms and conditions from expired contracts and agreements.

According to an OPA report last week, claim reimbursements and service fees from one of MRSO's vendors are automatically withdrawn from a CNMI revolving account with limited reconciliation.

MRSO, through the CNMI Office of the Governor, has established multiple contracts and agreement with numerous vendors in the Philippines, Guam, Hawaii, California, South Korea, and Taiwan. The contracts and agreements include services for medical utilization, transportation and logistics, hotel accommodations, and office rental spaces for MRSO's satellite offices.

OPA recommended that MRSO and related agencies review previously executed contracts and/or agreements and renegotiate terms to ensure a cost-effective and equitable program. OPA also recommended that MRSO implements standard operating procedures to ensure reconciliation of all vendor billings and payments.

In MRSO's response, MRSO director Ronald D. Sablan agreed with OPA's recommendation about reviewing previously executed contracts and/or agreements, adding that the OPA's recommendation was MRSO's standard practice prior to February 2019. Now, the special assistant for administration is responsible for contracts as appointed by the governor, and that MRSO is not privy to any contract negotiations and approvals, Sablan said.

OPA said the lack of any valid executed formal contract between MRSO and its vendors create a risk that may negatively hamper MRSO's operations, resources, and stakeholders.

Based on the contracts provided by MRSO on July 9, 2020, OPA discovered that MRSO's contracts and agreements have expired for two vendors for medical utilization, two for transportation and logistics support, and six for hotel accommodations.

OPA also requested from the Department of Finance any updates pertaining to all of MRSO contracts, but no updates were provided.

OPA said they learned during an interview that the CNMI government issued a request for proposal for transportation and logistics services in one of the foreign countries where medical referral services are commonly sought for CNMI patients. Only one vendor submitted a bid and was awarded the contract. However, that lone vendor later withdrew its bid even if contract negotiation was nearly completed due to the shutting down of borders worldwide because of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in the evacuation of nonresidents from certain foreign countries. This prompted the CNMI government to revert to the terms and conditions of the expired contracts with its former vendor for transportation and logistics services in that country.

OPA learned the request for proposal was for one of two services previously contracted for within that country.

Based on a review of an email correspondence received on April 20, 2021, OPA found the CNMI government elected to operate on a month-to-month basis for the two expired contracts.

OPA recognizes that MRSO has been operating in an unprecedented situation worldwide but, according to the auditor, this may potentially violate CNMI procurement regulations.

OPA noted that, according to standards, management may design control activities to include verification and reconciliation of transactions. OPA said the verification and reconciliation process will provide a better overview of the expenses paid to one vendor to quantify potential savings realized or conduct a cost-benefit analysis for contract negotiation.

The CNMI government contracted that one vendor for discounted services on medical expenses incurred by CNMI medical referral patients. In return, OPA said, the contract grants that one vendor the authority to automatically withdraw monthly payments through automated clearing house from a revolving account for all claims paid on behalf of the CNMI government.

In addition, a 15% access cost fee for all claims paid by that vendor is charged and automatically withdrawn monthly.

As of April 30, 2021, OPA noted that the vendor has withdrawn an estimated $3.3 million from the revolving account.

Through MRSO and Department of Finance, the vendor provided OPA documentation claiming the total "savings" incurred by the CNMI government as of March 31, 2021. However, OPA could not validate claims of CNMI savings due to the limited data provided by MRSO and Finance.

To ensure effective internal controls are implemented for accurate reconciliation, OPA requested for documents pertaining to the vendor that should have been maintained and verified at MRSO and Finance. However, OPA was notified that the listing of documents requested were forwarded directly to the vendor by both MRSO and Finance. The listing includes invoices paid by the vendor for individual medical claims that references to the monthly automatic automated clearing house withdrawals, monthly funds transfer confirmations indicating the amount automatically withdrawn, and invoices for the 15% fee automatically withdrawn from the revolving account.

Although OPA received a listing of the claims paid on behalf of the CNMI government and the monthly funds transfer confirmations, OPA found the listing of all claims:

- Did not have any identifiers that reference the monthly funds transfer confirmations for reconciliation purposes;
- Did not have any identifiers that reference the 15% access cost fee automatically withdrawn each month; and
- Had multiple erroneous transactions that were identified by the vendor and were automatically offset in the next month without concurrence from MRSO and/or Finance.

Through OPA's analysis and interviews conducted, OPA noted that the vendor automatically withdraws payments from the revolving account without invoices being reconciled or approved by MRSO to ensure accuracy and validity.

Documents reviewed by OPA indicated erroneous transactions that were corrected and addressed in the subsequent month by the vendor without concurrence from MRSO and/or Finance.

OPA said the lack of internal controls to maintain, review, and reconcile payments timely to identify these erroneous transactions puts the CNMI government at risk for potential fraud, waste, and abuse.

In addition, the auditor said, the lack of reconciliation puts MRSO at risk of not properly recording potential outstanding balances for other MRSO vendors.

Northern Marianas Humanities Council
Navigating the Human Experience

Calling for
NOMINATIONS

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is accepting nominations for the 2021 Governor's Humanities Awards.

This event, held annually in October as a part of CNMI Humanities Month, recognizes outstanding contributions to the humanities by individuals and organizations in the community.

Nominees should have a notable humanities achievement in the past year, as demonstrated in any of the following four categories:

- **Research and Publication in the Humanities;**
- **Preservation of Traditional Cultural Practices;**
- **Preservation of CNMI History; and**
- **Outstanding Humanities Teacher (in both classroom and non-classroom settings).**

A fifth category, **Lifetime Achievement**, recognizes significant contributions to the humanities over multiple decades. The award may be given posthumously. The nomination form and instructions can be downloaded at www.nmhcouncil.org. Paper copies are available at the council's office in the Springs Plaza Building, Gualo Rai. Nominations may be made by any member of the general public and are due no later than 4:00 pm on Friday October 1, 2021.

Awards will be presented at a special ceremony in October (time, date and venue to be announced) For more information, contact council staff at 235-4785 or 235-4787.

CEDA
COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950 | Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 | Fax: (670) 235-7147 | www.developcnmi.com

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

ON AN APPLICATION FOR A QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE AUTHORIZING THE ABATEMENT AND REBATE OF CERTAIN CNMI TAXES

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that:

**A.** ***Public hearing.*** In accordance with the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and pursuant to the rule-making procedures of the Administrative Procedures Act, the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) will conduct a public hearing at the *New Cafeteria Building, next to Building D, Marianas High School, Bwaay Lane, Susupe, Saipan*, on *Friday, October 1, 2021*, at *5:00 p.m.*, on the application of *Marshall Holdings CNMI LLC*, Applicant for a Qualifying Certificate, which request is for tax relief by way of abatement and rebate of CNMI taxes in consideration of Applicant's proposed *$6.447 million for solar energy production, inter-island ocean transport, import/export and eco-tourism.* All pursuant to the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and as set out in the Applicant's application for a Qualifying Certificate.

**B.** ***Nature of hearing.*** This hearing shall be open to the public. Oral or written statements will be received from anyone wishing to testify thereat, which statement will be incorporated into the records of the hearing.

**C.** ***Further Information.*** For further information, please contact CEDA at the above telephone numbers or visit its office at the CEDA Building, Beach Road, Oleai, Saipan.

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

# NMPASI

**NORTHERN MARIANAS PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SYSTEMS, INC.**

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) is soliciting proposals for Single Audit of financial and compliance audit for fiscal year ending **September 30, 2021**. NMPASI is designated, federally funded protection and advocacy system for persons with disabilities in the CNMI. NMPASI uses a variety of individual and systems advocacy approaches to protect people's rights, including legal and administrative remedies, legislative, policy change and trainings. Proposals for the financial and compliance audit shall be submitted to NMPASI, P.O. Box 503529, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than December 3, 2021. The audit shall be performed in compliance with the following guidelines:

1. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards;
2. OMB Circular A-133; and
3. Compliance with the general Requirements Applicable to Federal Financial Assistance Program.

Award will be based on specific factor such as prior experience, technical competence, ability to meet the deadline and price in this order. The contract for this audit will be awarded no later than **December 20, 2021**, and a final audit report shall be completed by **March 15, 2022.** A list of specific audit requirements and Agency's profile are available at NMPASI office, Gualo Rai. Any questions regarding this matter can be addressed to Mr. James Rayphand, Executive Director

# CUC's FAC remains the same in October

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s Fuel Adjustment Charge remains at $0.19355 per kilowatt-hour for the month of October.

Although there has been a slight increase in the Mean of Platts Singapore monthly pricing from July 2021 to October 2021 as notified by Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc., the increase did not equal or exceed a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel.

The FAC is one of two components that make up the CUC electric kWh rate, which is used to purchase fuel. The second component is the CUC base rate, which is used to fund operations, projects, and debt service. This base rate has not been increased since April 17, 2014.

CUC is required, pursuant to an order previously issued by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, to adjust (up or down) the FAC pass-through rate when the Mean of Platts Singapore monthly pricing equals or exceeds a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel used in the calculation of the current FAC rate. ***(PR)***

# 'Rapid communication with public is priority'

**By JOSHUA SANTOS**
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

On the behalf of the Torres administration, press secretary Kevin Bautista expressed his gratitude to the community for following and monitoring closely the many tropical storm advisories that were put out by the Office of the Governor about Tropical Storm Mindulle (20W), which brought heavy rainfall to the CNMI late last week.

In an interview with him on Sunday, Bautista said that effectively and rapidly communicating with the community ahead of tropical storms, typhoons, and other natural disasters is a "paramount priority" for the Torres administration.

"In every natural disaster threat to the Marianas, the Torres administration has made it a paramount priority to effectively and rapidly communicate to the general public in order to keep residents safe, especially the most vulnerable in our community. We thank the community for being cooperative and for following our numerous updates and announcements from Governor Torres and our Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management," said Bautista.

Bautista

Bautista added that many conversations between him and the National Weather Service took place last week, where it was learned that 20W formed within the CNMI region, bringing around 3 to 5 inches of rain to Saipan, Tinian, and Rota while the storm gradually developed into a tropical storm. Bautista described last week's storm as "a strange one" due to many different weather models from the NWS showing different projections because of how the storm was organized.

Briefly talking about Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' decision to call off work for the government's non-critical employees last week, Bautista explained that Torres took the CNMI's vulnerability to storms in the past, the unpredictable nature of 20W's development, and the fact that 20W was developing in the region all into consideration.

Bautista again thanked the community for its cooperation and said that last week was another reminder of "why we are Marianas Strong."

"It takes a home, a village, an island, and one Commonwealth to look out for one another during any natural disaster threat, and everyone from the Emergency Operations Center [on Capital Hill] to people on all three islands sharing our press releases with their loved ones. There's a lot of work being done by a lot of good work being done by good people in government, and this storm is a reminder of the hard work being done to protect the community," said Bautista.

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Free webinar on GovGuam contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering a free live webinar on Government of Guam Procurement on Sept. 30, 2021. The Guam PTAC will explain Government of Guam procurement, where to find opportunities, and how to submit bids. The webinar will run from **10am to 11:30am** and will be conducted via Zoom. The link to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar. To register, go to http://guamptac.com/news-and-events.php. ***(PR)***

### Public warned of box jellyfish

**MANGILAO, Guam**—The Department of Agriculture's Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources Fisheries would like to remind people to be on the lookout for box jellyfish. Box jellyfish can be found on the beach or in the water, especially on reef flats. Box jellyfish are anticipated from Sept. 30 to Oct. 2, 2021. Box jellyfish can sting even if washed on the beach and dead. If box jellyfish are seen, notify DAWR Fisheries at (671) 735-0289/91/94 or email fisheries@doag.guam.gov. ***(PR)***

## COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (1-670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com •
Website: www.cnmiports.com

## JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2021

**Opening date: September 20, 2021 Closing date: October 08, 2021**

Positions: (1) Receptionist/Secretary (Saipan)
(1) Custodial/Maintenance-I (CPA Rota)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, October 08, 2021.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

RODNEY S. CABARLES, Chairman · JOSEPH T. SAN NICOLAS, Vice Chairman · JOANNA C. ALDAN, Secretary · RINGO C. REYES, Treasurer · VACANT, Board Member

## MUNICIPAL SCHOLARSHIP OFFICE

Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
P.O. Box 520059 · San Jose Village · Tinian, MP 96952
E-Mail: tinianscholarship@gmail.com
Telephone: (670) 433-0504 | Facsimile: (670) 433-0504

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Municipal Scholarship Board hereby gives notice that there will be a Special Meeting on Thursday, September 30, 2021, at 4:30 p.m., at the Tinian Public Library, San Jose Village Tinian.

**AGENDA**

**I. PRELIMINARY**
A. Call to Order
B. Roll Call
C. Adoption of Agenda
D. Adoption of Minutes
- September 15, 2021 (TMSB Special Meeting)
- September 17, 2021 (TMSB Special Meeting)

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS**
**III. OLD BUSINESS**
**IV. NEW BUSINESS**
A. Review & Approval of Pending FA 2021 Applicants
**V. SCHEDULE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING**
**VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**
B. Discussion regarding issuance & receiving of 1 FA 2019 Applicant's Scholarship Award
**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**/S/Joseph T. San Nicolas**
**Acting Chairman**

[1]We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments on the day of the meeting.
[2]Pursuant to 1 CMC section 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.
[3]Individuals with special needs requiring special accommodations, please contact the TMSB office at least 48 hours prior to schedule meeting for assistance.

## A NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS SOCIAL SERVICE JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

KARIDAT
Catholic Charities - Diocese of Chalan Kanoa

**(1) SHELTER WORKER - PART TIME**
**(1) SHELTER WORKER - FULL TIME**

For more information, job description and application can be obtained from Karidat main office at Sister Remedios Community Center, Chalan Kanoa.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: Complete application form, copy of diploma, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of valid CNMI driver's license.

**NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.**
**CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2021 AT 4:00PM**

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios–bottom row fourth and fifth from left– share a photo with representatives of Karidat Social Services, Empty Vessel Ministry Foundation, CNMI Salvation Army, Miracle Hands Charity, and Marianas Food Bank after a turnover event where each nonprofit organization received $10,000 each. Also in the photo are press secretary Kevin Bautista, Finance Secretary David Atalig, and Office of Grants Management administrator Epiphanio E. Cabrera Jr.

JOSHUA SANTOS

# Five nonprofit groups get $10K each

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Five nonprofit organizations—Karidat Social Services, Empty Vessel Ministry Foundation, CNMI Salvation Army, Miracle Hands Charity, and Marianas Food Bank—received $10,000 checks from the CNMI government during a turnover event yesterday at the Office of the Governor conference room.

Before distributing the checks, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres briefly lauded the nonprofits for their work and contributions to the community during times of hardship in the CNMI, such as after natural disasters.

"[As] nonprofit organizations, you guys have done very, very well in doing outreaches, helping those that truly need it, and getting products out to them. …We've always said that during a disaster, a dollar from somewhere goes a long way for us here, a case of water goes a long way. Your contributions definitely [impact] the community, in a good way," said Torres.

Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios similarly expressed his gratitude to the five nonprofits for the work they do in the community. Palacios added that he hopes that the administration, Office of Grants Management, and other related agencies can again work together next year to put together and provide even more money to nonprofits.

Some representatives from the organizations gave remarks after receiving their $10,000. Lauri Ogumoro, who is executive director for Karidat Social Services, said the money will be used to replenish Karidat's food bank and to support the organization's other food assistance programs.

Salvation Army pastor Wayne Gillespie said the infusion of funds is "desperately needed funding." "I just want to say thank you very much. This is desperately needed funding for the Salvation Army, and we will continue to feed the people of the CNMI. Thank you for filling a lot of really hungry stomachs," he said.

During a prepared speech he gave before the checks were handed over, OGM administrator Epiphanio E. Cabrera Jr. said the funds that were turned over yesterday came from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs, and that the $50,000 in total was the final installment of funds out of around $4.04 million that the CNMI received over a year ago through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

Cabrera said a majority of the CARES Act funding went to preemptive improvement projects for the former Mariana Resort & Spa before it saw use as a government-run quarantine site, and various equipment purchases and infrastructure improvements for the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

**Commonwealth Utilities Corporation**
**Office of the Executive Director**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**CUC-RFP-21-032**
**SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND DATA ACQUISITION (SCADA) FOR POWER PLANT NO.1, LOWER BASE, SAIPAN**

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified and experienced entities for a turn-key design and implementation (Design, Supply and Installation) of SCADA system at its Primary Power Plant (Power Plant No.1), Lower Base, Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

*The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.*

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package.

**One (1) original and five (5) hard copies** of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-21-032, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. on October 13, 2021.** Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on September 22, 2021** to manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC's Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

**Commonwealth Utilities Corporation**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**
**CUC-RFP-21-036**

**Office Space Rental for CUC's Administrative Functions and Operations**

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from firms for Office Space Rental for CUC's Administrative Functions and Operations in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $25.00 for one package.

**One (1) original and five (5) hard copies** of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-21-036, Office Space Rental for CUC's Administrative Functions and Operations"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. on October 15, 2021.** Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on September 23, 2021** to Manny Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address, manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to John C. Mafnas, Contracts Officer at john.mafnas@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician at marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

# Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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## EDITORIAL

## Ignore Senate parliamentarian on immigration reform

Senate Democrats face a stark choice on immigration: improve the lives of millions of immigrants by giving them a path to legal residency—a move that would also prove a boon to the nation's economy—or hide behind a procedural recommendation and expose their rhetoric as empty promises.

It shouldn't be hard to make the right call.

The Senate parliamentarian determined last week that the Democrats' proposal to provide legal status to roughly 8 million people falls outside the boundaries of what can be done through budget reconciliation, a process that allows a simple majority to pass a bill instead of having to meet the usual 60-vote threshold.

But the parliamentarian's decision is only advice, an interpretation by the nonpartisan referee of the Senate's rules, and it can be ignored or overturned. Left with no other choice, the Senate Democratic majority must do just that.

Dismissing that advice is not a decision to be made lightly, of course, but it has happened before—most recently when Republicans removed the 60-vote threshold for voting on Supreme Court nominees when they controlled the chamber. Immigration reform is worth the risk.

The Democrats' plan would allow several categories of people who are in the U.S. illegally to apply for permanent residency, including those brought to the United States as children, known as "Dreamers."

It's also expected to impact immigrants who have been granted Temporary Protected Status due to dangerous conditions in their home countries, those with temporary work visas, farmworkers and other essential workers.

The measure not only would provide immigrants who are a vital part of our communities with peace of mind and help keep families together, it would also have widespread benefits to the United States.

In a letter sent to congressional leadership, a group of economists stressed how reform would increase wages and productivity, create jobs, generate additional tax revenue and strengthen worker protections for immigrant and nonimmigrant workers alike.

The current proposal is the best chance to enact change, as the 2022 midterm elections threaten Democratic control of Congress. Regardless that polls have consistently shown that a majority of Americans support a path to citizenship for those in the country illegally, Congress has repeatedly failed to act.

The last major effort to effect bipartisan immigration reform was in 2013, when a proposal passed the Senate but died in the House. Since then, the GOP shift to a hard-line attitude on immigration, spearheaded by former President Donald Trump, has made prospects dim further.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said Democrats are disappointed with the parliamentarian's decision and that they will be holding additional meetings with alternate proposals.

"The American people understand that fixing our broken immigration system is a moral and economic imperative," Schumer said in a statement.

The majority of American people do understand, but it's up to Democrats to stick to the courage of their convictions and take a stand. The parliamentarian is not an elected official, they are.

Democrats made a promise. They need to deliver.

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WHEN I GROW UP I'M GOING TO BE PRESIDENT.
IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START WORKING ON YOUR COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN.
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LAS VEGAS SUN 2021
MIKE SMITH

## An idea whose time has come: the four-day workweek

**By LEAH HANCOCK**
The Baltimore Sun

*Leah Hancock is the lead associate at Organizational Performance Group where her work centers on helping people work together better.*

The four-day workweek's moment has arrived. With California Congressman Mark Takano's introduction of legislation to reduce the standard workweek from 40 to 32 hours, awareness of a shorter workweek—and enthusiasm for it—is gaining. And so is the skepticism around it.

Initial skepticism is a reasonable response to a paradigm shift in how we think about work. American work culture has been defined by underlying ideals of career as identity, workaholism, aspirations for continuous growth and a relentless focus on creating shareholder value. It is not easy to untether ourselves from the only reality we know.

And yet, if there were ever a time for a paradigm shift, this is it. For so many, the muscles of resilience and adaptation have strengthened over the past 18 months with every challenge brought on by the pandemic and other global crises. The rapid, significant transition across industries to working from home provided evidence that we can adapt quickly in response to changing conditions. Now, we have an opportunity to exercise these muscles to intentionally evolve from outdated conceptions of what work must look like.

For leaders of organizations and teams, the shift to a four-day workweek requires re-imagining standard operating procedures, increasing innovation and, perhaps most importantly, trusting in employees.

Four-day workweek pilots are emerging across the globe, with some companies now shifting from the pilot phase to implementing the policy permanently. Microsoft Japan, Unilever New Zealand and Kickstarter represent just a few of a growing number of organizations exploring the four-day workweek.

Beyond the U.S., political leaders are voicing support for the concept. Last year, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern endorsed employers implementing a four-day workweek to help stimulate domestic tourism in response to industry downturn brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. In February of this year, the Spanish government agreed to test a 32-hour workweek pilot without cutting workers' pay. Ireland and Scotland also have trials planned.

Proponents cite many benefits, including reduced burnout, improved physical and mental health, increased gender equity, and positive environmental impacts. It is easy to imagine what we might do with an additional day—spend time with family and friends, pursue a hobby, enroll in classes, become politically engaged, sleep. Many in favor of the four-day workweek envision a more fulfilled (and rested) community.

Pilot findings show increased productivity as well. Microsoft Japan saw a 40% increase in productivity (measured in sales per employee) in their 2019 pilot, and New Zealand-based Perpetual Guardian, a trust management company, reported gains of 20%. Among companies that have adopted a four-day week, nearly two-thirds report increased productivity.

Some leaders will see the research and be convinced that a pilot in their organization is worthwhile. Others will resist the idea. Leaders should get curious about any resistance that arises. What theories or beliefs are at the root of their concerns? Many leaders were taught that face-time with employees is the only way to ensure accountability, productivity and teamwork. Less face-time, which is inherent to the four-day workweek model (and work-from-home arrangements), can feel to some like a loss of control. The leaders we need today lean into this discomfort and make decisions that will propel their organizations to be the best for their employees, their clients, their communities and the world.

While each organization will need to find what works for them, doing so can be a productive exercise. Let employees work out the details rather than trying to "solve" the four-day workweek challenge from the top down. Perpetual Guardian asked employees to propose their own productivity measures, including how they and their teams would increase productivity, and to coordinate time off. Awin, a Berlin-based tech firm, saw 80 employees volunteer for task forces to ensure that their switch to a four-day workweek went smoothly. Those who are closest to the work and potential challenges are often closest to the solutions. The website www.4dayweek.com also offers many resources to help companies design a four-day workweek pilot.

For more than a century, economists have predicted that accelerating technological advances would enable highly developed countries to dramatically scale back working hours. Let's step off the treadmill of ever-increasing work and rebalance in the way our bodies, communities, and environment need to regenerate.

**EDITORIAL POLICY** Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

# The US-China face-off is looking like the Cold War

President Joe Biden hosted a summit meeting Friday that could turn out to be a watershed—but if you weren't watching, you might have missed it.

The meeting brought together the leaders of a deliberately low-key group called "the Quad": the United States, Japan, India and Australia.

U.S. officials downplayed the session, describing it as "an informal gathering of leading democracies in the Indo-Pacific."

China wasn't fooled. Its diplomats have spent months denouncing the Quad as a Cold War-style alliance aimed at containing Beijing's rise as the dominant power in Asia.

And they're right.

Biden and his fellow Quad leaders never publicly uttered the word "China," but the Quad is all about containment. It seeks to blunt China's growing influence, deter it from launching military adventures and prevent it from muscling the United States and other countries out of Asia's growing markets.

President Joe Biden walks to the Quad summit with, from left, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, in the East Room of the White House, Friday, Sept. 24, 2021, in Washington. AP

The Quad isn't a military alliance—formally, at least. A Biden aide who briefed reporters before the summit took pains to make that point three times in 20 minutes.

But last month, four navies staged a massive military exercise in the Philippine Sea east of China. The participants were the same four: the United States, Japan, India and Australia.

All four are democracies. More to the point, all four have been alarmed to see China exert economic and military power to get its way—from seizing islands and building bases on contested territory in the South China Sea to threatening Taiwan and attacking Indian army positions in the Himalayas.

In Australia, the muscle China used was economic: After Australia called for an investigation of the origins of the coronavirus, Beijing retaliated by cutting imports of Australian beef and called on the Canberra government to stifle "anti-China statements" from members of Parliament and the media.

The naked pressure backfired; the Aussies got their backs up and decided to move closer to the United States.

One result was Aukus, the new military partnership of Australia, Britain and the United States, whose first big project is building nuclear-powered submarines for the Australian navy.

Between the Quad and Aukus, "we're seeing the emergence of a new security architecture," Bonnie Glaser, a China expert at the German Marshall Fund of the United States, told me. "It sends a signal to Beijing that other countries are willing to stand up together and defend a rules-based international order."

Containing China has become a top priority of U.S. foreign policy, with coalition-building as Biden's instrument of choice. That shouldn't be surprising; it's one theater in which the United States enjoys a clear advantage.

China is very good at many things: economic growth, large-scale construction projects, acquiring foreign technology, cyberespionage. But it hasn't been successful at making friends. It's a superpower with client states but no real allies, unless you count Pakistan and, recently, Russia.

**By DOYLE MCMANUS**
Los Angeles Times

*Doyle McManus is a columnist for the* Los Angeles Times*. Readers may send him email at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com.*

That helps explain the fury of Chinese denunciations of the Quad, Aukus and other regional groupings: It's a game they can't play.

The question is whether China will launch a military challenge against the new coalition before the U.S. has time to consolidate it.

The test could come over Taiwan, the breakaway province that China's ruling Communist Party has long vowed to reincorporate into the motherland.

"The standard view in Asia is that Taiwan is the canary in the coal mine," said Elbridge Colby, a former Pentagon official whose new book, "The Strategy of Denial," focuses on the U.S.-China confrontation.

The recently retired commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, Navy Adm. Phil Davidson, warned in March that China could pose a serious threat to Taiwan "in the next six years," Colby noted.

Chinese President Xi Jinping "can see that the trends are not favorable," Colby said.

Australia's new submarines could help deter a seaborne invasion, for example, but they won't be in the water for more than a decade. So the Chinese leader could view the next few years as a last opportunity to take Taiwan by force.

"We should be worried," Colby said.

If this is beginning to sound like the bad old days of the Cold War, when the United States and its allies obsessed over the prospect of a Soviet invasion of Europe, it should.

No historical analogy is perfect, of course. Our competition-plus-conflict with China is complicated by the two countries' deep economic entanglement, which wasn't the case with the Soviet Union.

But in most other respects, the comparison fits: two nuclear superpowers that disagree over ideology, often view global power as a zero-sum game and—in the case of the United States—build coalitions and alliances to reinforce their influence.

"We are not seeking a new Cold War," Biden said at the United Nations last week. But thanks to Xi's assertiveness, he's gotten one—and no matter how soothing his words, he's acting accordingly.

# We call them 'woolly' mammoths for a reason

Ben Lamm and George Church are thinking big. Their new bioscience and genetics startup is called Colossal, and Colossal's first project is mammoth. Literally.

Lamm, an entrepreneur, and Church, a renowned Harvard geneticist, are planning to "de-extinct" the woolly mammoth, the massive, tusked beast that roamed the cold northern steppes during the Pleistocene. The last mammoth died 4,000 years ago on Wrangel Island, a final frigid outpost in the Arctic Ocean.

In an Austin American-Statesman interview, Lamm doesn't hide his breathless enthusiasm: "I truly believe that Colossal will not only be the first company to bring back extinct species, starting with the woolly mammoth," but he believes also that reintroducing the mammoth will "help slow down carbon emissions in the region and help restore lost ecosystems."

Lamm says that Colossal's goal is "not just the successful resurrection of the woolly mammoth, but it's (sic) full rewilding into the Arctic."

Why do I detect the familiar whiff of snake oil, the heady aroma that attracts headlines and startup funds?

For one thing, this story depends heavily on its sensational Rip Van Winkle quality, the idea that a species that last saw the light of day 4,000 years ago can be reawakened to assume its ecological niche on the Arctic tundra.

In fairness, Lamm and Church don't try very hard to hide this sleight-of-hand. But, of course, the woolly mammoth isn't being "resurrected." Colossal will use advanced gene-editing techniques to copy preserved mammoth genes into the genome of an Asian elephant in order to generate in its offspring "increased body fat, characteristic shaggy hair, sebaceous gland development, a domed cranium, shorter ears and tail, as well as cold-adapted hemoglobin that would better allow for oxygen transfer in the bloodstream in the cold."

Thus an Asian elephant surrogate will gestate and bear a cold-tolerant, shaggy, small-eared, short-tailed, high-domed elephant-mammoth hybrid that will look "very similar" to a real woolly mammoth.

Lamm, ignoring the elephant in the womb, pictures it differently: "The result will not be just an elephant-mammoth hybrid, but it will both look and function as a full woolly mammoth." He knows that Rip Van Winkle is the story that his audience wants to hear.

Lamm envisions vast herds of mammoths repopulating the frigid north and reinvigorating the frozen tundra. But real mammoths were woolly for a reason: During their heyday the north really was frigid and the mammoths' woolly coats kept them warm. As the globe's last ice age came to an end, so did the woolly mammoth. They succumbed to climate change.

Species go extinct for a reason and according to a pitiless logic imposed by nature. The irony of Colossal's de-extinction project is that it hopes to reintroduce woolly mammoths into an environment for which they are no longer suited and which we show no signs of preventing from growing even warmer and, thus, more unsuitable.

I suspect that if Colossal is able to produce a few elephant-mammoth hybrids, they're unlikely to grow into teeming multitudes that will "rewild" the Arctic. In fact, they're more likely to become commodities, exhibits in zoos and nature parks. In other words, oddities and amusements. Eventually trophy hunters will pay top dollar to bag a "mammoth." The proceeds will go into research to "save the species."

**By JOHN M. CRISP**
Tribune News Service

*John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for* Tribune News Service*, lives in Georgetown, Texas, and can be reached at jcrispcolumns@gmail.com.*

If this seems unduly cynical, note that this is the role into which we are already forcing most of our remaining megafauna.

The age of the woolly mammoth has come and gone, and the elephant-mammoth hybrid will be a poor substitute. But the Rip Van Winkle fantasy is attractive. One wonders what the woolly mammoth would "think" upon opening his eyes after 4,000 years of extinction and beholding his former habitat: melting permafrost, diminishing sea ice, and seemingly irreversible warming temperatures.

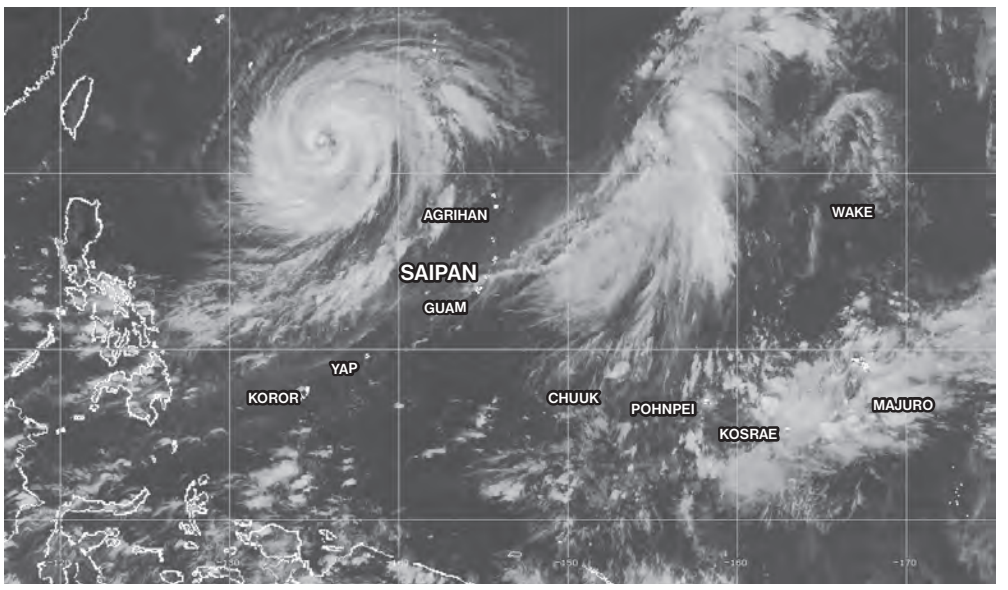
At first he might be sympathetic. His species was a victim of climate change, too. His sympathy might fade when he discovers that we, the only species capable of maintaining the health of its own environment, might have done something about it. But we could not muster the will to act.

# The Weather

## 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Partly cloudy with isolated showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph. | Partly cloudy. Isolated showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms in the evening, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after midnight. | Mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. | Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers and thunderstorms. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. |
| 87º 78º | 87º 78º | 87º 78º | 87º 78º | 87º 78º |

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE




**PICTURE TIME: 8:58 AM, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021**

Light southerly winds and a few showers prevail across the Marianas this morning.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/*

| MICRONESIA | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Morning clouds | 82 / 90 °F |
| Palau | Mostly cloudy | 81 / 87 °F |
| Yap | Partly sunny | 80 / 89 °F |
| Chuuk | Mostly cloudy | 79 / 87 °F |
| Pohnpei | Morning clouds | 76 / 85 °F |
| Kosrae | Partly cloudy | 83 / 88 °F |
| Majuro | Decreasing cloudiness | 83 / 88 °F |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:06 AM | 6:07 PM |
| Thursday | 6:06 AM | 6:07 PM |
| Friday | 6:06 AM | 6:06 PM |
| Saturday | 6:06 AM | 6:05 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Today | - | 12:43 PM | - |
| Thursday | 12:07 AM | 1:34 PM | - |
| Friday | 1:00 AM | 2:24 PM | - |
| Saturday | 1:55 AM | 3:11 PM | - |
| Sunday | 2:50 AM | 3:56 PM | - |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Auckland | Mostly cloudy | 56 / 60 °F |
| Beijing | Partly cloudy | 64 / 89 °F |
| Hong Kong | Partly cloudy | 79 / 90 °F |
| Honolulu | High level clouds | 75 / 84 °F |
| London | Mostly cloudy | 57 / 66 °F |
| Los Angeles | Morning clouds | 59 / 77 °F |
| Manila | Mostly cloudy | 80 / 88 °F |
| Melbourne | Morning clouds | 44 / 58 °F |
| Miami | Partly cloudy | 80 / 89 °F |
| New York | Mostly sunny | 61 / 74 °F |
| Osaka | Morning clouds | 69 / 86 °F |
| Paris | Afternoon clouds | 58 / 73 °F |
| Pusan | Mostly cloudy | 69 / 77 °F |
| Rome | Mostly cloudy | 69 / 77 °F |
| Salem | Sunny | 51 / 85 °F |
| San Francisco | Morning clouds | 55 / 67 °F |
| Seoul | High level clouds | 64 / 82 °F |
| Tokyo | Mostly cloudy | 71 / 74 °F |
| Washington, DC | Partly cloudy | 66 / 78 °F |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | FEET |
|---|---|---|
| 7:13 AM | Low Tide | 0.22 |
| 3:25 PM | High Tide | 1.57 |
| 8:42 PM | Low Tide | 1.28 |
| - | - | - |

## STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

**Continue good hand hygiene**

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

**Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic**

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

**Rumor control**

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

*Source: Office of the Governor*

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## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2021

### DEPARTURES

**SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117 | 6:45am | 7:25am | 1, 3, 6 |
| UA117 | 9:45am | 10:25am | 2, 4, 5, 7 |

**GUAM-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA183 | 7:05pm | 8:50pm | 2, 5 |
| UA183 | 7:25pm | 9:10pm | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 |

**SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117/183 | 6:45am | 9:10pm | 1, 3, 6 via Guam |
| UA117/183 | 9:45am | 8:50pm | 2, 5 via Guam |
| UA117/183 | 9:45am | 9:10pm | 4, 7 via Guam |

**SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7C3406 | 3:10PM | 6:55PM | 3 |
| TW9308 | 3:20PM | 8:00PM | 4 |
| OZ6243 | 4:00PM | 7:40PM | 6 |

### ARRIVALS

**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA174 | 5:00am | 5:41am | 1, 3, 6 |
| UA174 | 8:00am | 8:41am | 2, 4, 5, 7 |

**MANILA (MNL)-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184 | 9:50pm | 3:55am+1 | 2, 5 |
| UA184 | 10:25pm | 4:30am+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 |

**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184/174 | 9:50pm | 5:41am+1 | 2, 5 via Guam |
| UA184/174 | 10:25pm | 5:41am+1 | 7 via Guam |
| UA184/174 | 10:25pm | 8:41am+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6 via Guam |

**INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7C3405 | 8:30AM | 2:10PM | 3 |
| OZ6233 | 9:00AM | 2:30PM | 6 |
| TW9307 | 10:00AM | 2:20PM | 4 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

**SAIPAN TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1301 | 8:30AM | 9:00AM | Daily |
| 1302 | 11:00AM | 11:30AM | Daily |
| 1303 | 1:30PM | 2:00PM | Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 1304 | 3:30PM | 4:00PM | Daily |

**ROTA TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3101 | 9:30AM | 10:00AM | Daily |
| 3102 | 12:00AM | 12:30AM | Daily |
| 3103 | 1:30PM | 3:00PM | Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 3104 | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | Daily |

**ROTA TO GUAM**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3401 | 12:15 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**GUAM TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4301 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**SAIPAN TO TINIAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1201 | 7:00 | 7:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1202 | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 1203 | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily |
| 1204 | 10:00 | 10:15 | Daily |
| 1205 | 11:00 | 11:15 | Daily |
| 1206 | 12:00 | 12:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1207 | 13:00 | 13:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1208 | 14:00 | 14:15 | Daily |
| 1209 | 15:00 | 15:15 | Daily |
| 1210 | 16:00 | 16:15 | Daily |
| 1211 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Daily |
| 1212 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**TINIAN TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2101 | 7:30 | 7:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2102 | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| 2103 | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 2104 | 10:30 | 10:45 | Daily |
| 2105 | 11:30 | 11:45 | Daily |
| 2106 | 12:30 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2107 | 13:30 | 13:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2108 | 14:30 | 14:45 | Daily |
| 2109 | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 2110 | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 2111 | 17:30 | 17:45 | Daily |
| 2112 | 18:30 | 18:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

# Business

## UK readies soldiers to help ease gas shortages at pumps

**LONDON** (AP)—The British government put dozens of soldiers on standby Monday to help easy fuel supply problems caused by a shortage of truck drivers, a situation that has spurred panic buying of gasoline across the country.

As unions called for emergency workers to be given priority for fuel supplies, the government said it was placing British army tanker drivers in "a state of readiness in order to be deployed if required to deliver fuel to where it is needed most."

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said Britain had "strong supplies of fuel."

"However, we are aware of supply chain issues at fuel station forecourts and are taking steps to ease these as a matter of priority," he said.

Long lines of vehicles have formed at many gas stations around Britain since Friday, causing spillover traffic jams on busy roads. Tempers have frayed as some drivers waited for hours.

The Petrol Retailers Association, which represents almost 5,500 independent outlets, said Sunday that about two-thirds of its members had run out of fuel, as the truck driver shortage set off rounds of gas panic-buying.

The Conservative government insisted blamed the problems on consumer behavior.

"The only reason we don't have petrol on the forecourts is that people are buying petrol they don't need," said Environment Secretary George Eustice.

Major fuel firms, including BP, Shell and Esso, said in a joint statement that they expected demand for gas to "return to its normal levels in the coming days."

"We would encourage people to buy fuel as they usually would," the statement said.

But critics urged the government to get fuel flowing so the shortage does not have damaging spillover effects on

Closed pumps are seen on the forecourt of a petrol station which has run out of fuel after an outbreak of panic buying in the UK, in Manchester, England, Monday, Sept. 27, 2021. AP

tants, police staff and other key workers mustn't be left stranded or forced to queue for hours simply to get to a pump," she said.

The haulage industry says the U.K. is short as many as 100,000 truckers, due to a perfect storm of factors including the coronavirus pandemic,

Roland McKibbin, an electrician in London, said he has had to cancel jobs because he couldn't get gas.

"No fuel means I can't drive, which means I can't get to jobs with my tools," he said. "So, basically, the panic-buying idiots have lost me income and directly taken food off the

day that it will issue 5,000 emergency visas to foreign truck drivers to help prevent a Christmas without turkey or toys for many British families.

But that falls far short of the number needed, and critics also said the 3-month visas were too short to entice European truck drivers.

Ruby McGregor-Smith, president of the Confederation of British Industry, said the visas were "the equivalent of throwing a thimble of water on a bonfire."

Radu Dinescu, general secretary of the National Union of Road Transporters in Romania, said Romanian drivers—who worked in the U.K. in large numbers before Brexit—now "prefer EU stability." Romania is a member of the EU and Dinescu said its drivers can earn high salaries working in France or Germany.

"The U.K. seems to be experiencing a paradox … British citizens do not want to practice the job of truck driver, while at the same time they do not want other non-U.K. citizens to come to do this job," he told The Associated Press.

Olaf Scholz, leader of Germany's Social Democrats, the party that came first in the country's election on Sunday, also linked Britain's worker shortages to Brexit.

## China's power cuts may foreshadow shortages of global goods

**BEIJING** (AP)—Global shoppers face possible shortages of smartphones and other goods ahead of Christmas after power cuts to meet official energy use targets forced Chinese factories to shut down and left some households in the dark.

In the northeastern city of Liaoyang, 23 people were hospitalized with gas poisoning after ventilation in a metal casting factory was shut off following a power outage, according to state broadcaster CCTV. No deaths were reported.

Factories were idled to avoid exceeding limits on energy use imposed by Beijing to promote efficiency. Economists and an environmental group say manufacturers used up this year's quota faster than planned as export demand rebounded from the coronavirus pandemic.

A components supplier for Apple Inc.'s iPhones said it suspended production at a factory west of Shanghai under orders from local authorities.

The disruption to China's vast manufacturing industries during one of their busiest seasons reflects the ruling Communist Party's struggle to balance economic growth with efforts to rein in pollution and emissions of climate-changing gases.

"Beijing's unprecedented resolve in enforcing energy consumption limits could result in long-term benefits, but the short-term economic costs are substantial," Nomura economists Ting Lu, Lisheng Wang and Jing Wang said in a report Monday.

They said the impact might be so severe that they cut their economic growth forecast for China to 4.7% from 5.1% over a year earlier in the current quarter. They cut their outlook for annual growth to 7.7% from 8.2%.

Global financial markets already were on edge about the possible collapse of one of China's biggest real estate developers, Evergrande Group, which is struggling to avoid a default on billions of dollars of debt.

Manufacturers already face shortages of processor chips, disruptions in shipping and other lingering effects of the global shutdown of travel and trade to fight the coronavirus pandemic. Residents of China's northeast, where autumn temperatures are falling, report power cuts and appealed on social media for the government to restore supplies.

## Powell says spike in inflation lasting longer than expected

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell is preparing to tell Congress that the current spike in U.S. inflation has proven to be larger and more long-lasting than expected.

But, in remarks prepared for delivery Tuesday, he says that if inflation does not abate, the Fed is ready to use its tools to lower the pressure on prices.

Powell is due to appear Tuesday with Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen at an oversight hearing on the government's massive support programs passed to deal with the COVID pandemic. The Fed made Powell's remarks public late Monday.

In this Thursday, July 15, 2021, file photo, Federal Reserve Board Chair Jerome Powell testifies before Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs hearing to examine the Semiannual Monetary Policy Report to Congress, on Capitol Hill in Washington. AP

"As the economy continues to reopen and spending rebounds, we are seeing upward pressure on prices, particularly due to supply bottlenecks in some sectors," Powell says in his prepared remarks. "These effects have been larger and longer lasting than anticipated, but they will abate, and as they do, inflation is expected to drop back toward our longer-run goal 2% goal."

Powell is expected to face tough questions about inflation, especially from Republican lawmakers, who are warning that the country could be seeing the type of runaway inflation not seen since the 1970s.

Consumer prices in recent months have been posting 12-month gains as high as 5.4%, a rate not seen since 2008.

Powell said that the unprecedented process of reopening the economy after the COVID shutdowns has resulted in a number of problems that could continue in coming months.

"As reopening continues, bottlenecks, hiring difficulties and other constraints could again prove to be greater and more enduring than anticipated, posing upside risks to inflation," Powell said.

But he said, "If sustained higher inflation were to become a serious concern, we would certainly respond and use our tools to ensure that inflation runs at levels that are consistent with our goals."

## Gas blowout near Los Angeles leads to up to $1.8B settlement

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Thousands of families sickened and forced from their Los Angeles homes after the nation's largest-known natural gas leak have reached a settlement of up to $1.8 billion with a utility, attorneys said Monday.

The settlement with Southern California Gas Co. and its parent company, Sempra Energy, will compensate 35,000 plaintiffs from the 2015 blowout that took nearly four months to control.

The Aliso Canyon blowout led to the largest-known release of methane in U.S. history and was blamed for sickening thousands of residents who moved out of homes near the San Fernando Valley to escape a sulfurous stench and maladies including headaches, nausea and nose bleeds.

The plaintiffs alleged personal injury for their illnesses and property damage to their homes. SoCalGas spent more than $1 billion on the the blowout—with most going to temporarily relocate 8,000 families. The utility has faced more than 385 lawsuits on behalf of 48,000 people.

"Our goal has always been obtaining justice for the men, women and children who were failed by SoCalGas throughout every turn of this catastrophe," attorney Brian Panish said in a statement.

Plaintiffs alleged they suffered personal injury and property damage after a natural gas storage well failed and uncontrollably released nearly 100,000 tons of methane and other substances into the atmosphere over 118 days.

SoCalGas said it would record an after-tax charge of approximately $1.1 billion this month and expects total settlement payments of up to $1.85 billion. The agreement is subject to about 97% of plaintiffs accepting it and could be reduced if fewer agree.

"These agreements are an important milestone that will help the community and our company work toward putting this difficult chapter behind us," said Scott Drury, CEO of SoCalGas.

Matt Pakucko, founder of Save Porter Ranch, issued a statement repeating his call for the permanent shutdown of the facility, where natural gas is stored beneath a mountain in vacant, old oil wells.

"You can't put a price tag on human suffering," he said. "SoCalGas' devastating blowout will never be behind us until the Aliso Canyon storage facility is shut down and the danger it poses to the community is permanently eliminated. We are nowhere near a resolution."

# Nation

## GOP blocks bill to keep government going; new try ahead

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Republican senators blocked a bill Monday night to keep the government operating and allow federal borrowing, but Democrats aiming to avert a shutdown pledged to try again—at the same time pressing ahead on President Joe Biden's big plans to reshape government.

The efforts are not necessarily linked, but the fiscal yearend deadline to fund the government past Thursday is bumping up against the Democrats' desire to make progress on Biden's expansive $3.5 trillion federal overhaul.

It's all making for a tumultuous moment for Biden and his party, with consequences certain to shape his presidency and the lawmakers' own political futures.

Success would mean a landmark accomplishment, if Democrats can helm Biden's big bill to passage. Failure—or a highly unlikely government shutdown and debt crisis—could derail careers.

"You know me, I'm a born optimist," Biden told reporters Monday, as he rolled up his sleeve for a COVID-19 booster shot. "We're gonna get it done."

Monday's 50-48 vote against taking up the bill fell well short of the 60 needed to proceed over a GOP filibuster. Democratic Majority Leader Chuck Schumer switched his vote to "no," a procedural step to allow him to bring the measure back for consideration, which he said would happen this week.

With days to go, Democrats said they will try again before Thursday's deadline to pass a bill funding government operations past the Sept. 30 fiscal yearend, stripping out the debate over the debt limit for another day, closer to a separate October deadline.

Meanwhile, the real action is unfolding behind the scenes over the $3.5 trillion measure, with Biden and his Democratic allies in Congress seeking a once-in-a-generation reworking of the nation's balance sheets.

From free pre-kindergarten and child care subsidies for families with small children to dental care and hearing aids for seniors with Medicare, there's a lot in the president's proposal—all to be paid for with higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy.

With Republicans solidly opposed, Democrats are rushing to trim the total and win holdouts within their own party.

"We just have to make difficult choices," Speaker Nancy Pelosi told House Democrats during an evening caucus meeting, according to a person granted anonymity to discuss the private session.

As the overall price tag comes down, Pelosi said the president is "working on that piece," referring to talks underway with the Senate. Despite the rush to amass votes, Pelosi said the House Democrats would not move ahead on a bill until it is acceptable to their colleagues in the Senate. "We're not there yet," she said.

Exiting the caucus meeting, Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., the chairman of the Way & Means Committee, said as momentum builds toward Thursday, he was expecting a new total amount: "Let's pop the number."

## Hospitals fear staffing shortages as vaccine deadlines loom

Hospitals and nursing homes around the U.S. are bracing for worsening staff shortages as state deadlines arrive for health care workers to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

With ultimatums taking effect this week in states like New York, California, Rhode Island and Connecticut, the fear is that some employees will quit or let themselves be fired or suspended rather than get the vaccine.

"How this is going to play out, we don't know. We are concerned about how it will exacerbate an already quite serious staffing problem," said California Hospital Association spokesperson Jan Emerson-Shea, adding that the organization "absolutely" supports the state's vaccination requirement.

New York health care employees had until the end of the day Monday to get at least one dose, but some hospitals had already begun suspending or otherwise taking action against holdouts.

Erie County Medical Center Corp. in Buffalo said about 5% of its hospital workforce has been put on unpaid leave for not being vaccinated, along with 20% of staff at its nursing home. And the state's largest health care provider, Northwell Health, said it has begun removing unvaccinated workers from its system, though it said its workforce is nearly 100% vaccinated.

"To those who have not yet made that decision, please do the right thing," New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said.

Some New York hospitals prepared contingency plans that included cutting back on noncritical services and limiting nursing home admissions. The governor also drew up plans to summon help from National Guard members with medical training, retirees or vaccinated workers from outside the state.

About a dozen states have vaccination mandates covering health care workers in hospitals, long-term care facilities or both. Some allow exemptions on medical or religious grounds, but those employees often must submit to regular COVID-19 testing.

States that have set such requirements tend to have high vaccination rates already. The highest rates are concentrated in the Northeast, the lowest ones in the South and Midwest.

The Biden administration also will require the roughly 17 million workers at health facilities that receive federal Medicare or Medicaid to be fully vaccinated under a rule still being developed.

That has worried some hospital officials, particularly in rural communities where vaccination rates tend to be lower. ***(AP)***

## Amtrak train that derailed was going just under speed limit

**JOPLIN, Mont.** (AP)—An Amtrak train that derailed in rural Montana over the weekend was going just under the speed limit at about 75 mph (121 kph) when it went off the track along a gradual curve, killing three people and possibly ejecting passengers, U.S. investigators said Monday.

Workers stand near train tracks, Monday, Sept. 27, 2021, next to overturned cars from an Amtrak train that derailed Saturday, near Joplin, Mont., killing three people and injuring others. AP

Investigators do not know the cause of the accident, but they are studying video from the train and another locomotive that went over the same track a little over an hour earlier, National Transportation Safety Board Vice Chairman Bruce Landsberg said. The derailed train also had a black box that records everything happening in the train, he said.

"We have experts that are studying the camera footage frame by frame to make sure that we see exactly what the engineer saw—or maybe didn't see," Landsberg said.

The train derailed before a switch in the line, where one set of tracks turned into two, on a stretch of track that had been inspected just two days before, he said.

The westbound Empire Builder was traveling from Chicago to Seattle when it left the tracks Saturday afternoon near Joplin, a town of about 200. The train, carrying 141 passengers and 16 crew members, had two locomotives and 10 cars, eight of which derailed, with some tipping onto their sides.

When asked about wooden ties that were seen along the side of the tracks, and whether there was recent maintenance on that section, Landsberg did not answer directly.

"That will be one of the questions that we look at," he said. "Maintenance will be a really big concern for us. We don't know, at this point, exactly what happened, whether it was a track issue, whether it was a mechanical issue with the train. So all of these things are open."

## ACROSS THE NATION

### Fires threatening California's sequoias continue to grow

**THREE RIVERS, Calif.** (AP)—California firefighters battled fast-growing forest fires threatening giant sequoias and small communities in the Sierra Nevada on Monday and worked to fully surround a suspected arson wildfire that destroyed homes last week. More than 2,000 firefighters were on the lines of the Windy Fire burning on the Tule River Indian Reservation and in Sequoia National Forest, including Giant Sequoia National Monument. The fire had scorched more than 133 square miles (344 square kilometers) after growing by nearly 11 square miles (28 square kilometers) in 24 hours, according to a Sequoia National Forest statement. Just 2% of the fire was contained.

### After 5 years, Obamas to break ground on Presidential Center

**CHICAGO** (AP)—After five years of legal battles, gentrification concerns and a federal review, Barack and Michelle Obama were expected to attend a celebratory groundbreaking Tuesday on their legacy project in a lakefront Chicago park. Construction on the site along Lake Michigan, near the Obama family home and where the former president started his political career on Chicago's South Side, officially began last month. Work on the Obama Presidential Center is expected to take about five years. The Obamas were scheduled to host an event, which will be streamed online to limit crowds amid the coronavirus pandemic, with Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

### Atlanta spa-shooting suspect to enter plea in 4 killings

**ATLANTA** (AP)—A man already sentenced to life in prison after pleading guilty to fatally shooting four people at a massage business outside Atlanta is set to enter a plea to shooting four others on the same day at two spas inside the city. Robert Aaron Long, 22, is scheduled to appear Tuesday in Fulton County Superior Court, where he will enter a plea on charges including murder, aggravated assault and domestic terrorism. District Attorney Fani Willis is seeking the death penalty, as well as a sentencing enhancement under Georgia's new hate crimes law. In July, Long pleaded guilty in Cherokee County to charges including four counts of murder. He received four sentences of life without parole plus an additional 35 years. Those killed in Cherokee County were: Paul Michels, 54; Xiaojie "Emily" Tan, 49; Daoyou Feng, 44; and Delaina Yaun, 33. The Atlanta victims were: Suncha Kim, 69; Soon Chung Park, 74; Hyun Jung Grant, 51; and Yong Ae Yue, 63.

### Teen dies after becoming unresponsive while being restrained

**WICHITA, Kan.** (AP)—A 17-year-old who became unresponsive while being restrained at a Kansas juvenile facility died two days later at a hospital, authorities said. The teen was taken into custody Friday by Wichita police on suspicion of three counts of battery on a law enforcement officer, said Col. Brian White of the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office. Police took him to the Sedgwick County juvenile intake assessment center, where he assaulted staff, White said. The juvenile was restrained and became unresponsive, White said. Emergency medical responders took him to a hospital, where he died on Sunday. It is unclear whether the restraints played any role in causing the youth to become unresponsive while in custody. That is one of the things the autopsy, the toxicology report and investigators are trying to determine. The youth was Black and the race of the police officers was not immediately available, but there were Black, white and Hispanic staff at the intake center, said Benjamin Blick, spokesman for the Sedgwick County sheriff's office.

# Asia

# Japan prepares to lift virus emergency steps nationwide

**TOKYO** (AP)—Japan is set to lift all coronavirus emergency measures when they expire later this week as the infections slow and the nation tries to reactivate its economy.

Officials in charge of coronavirus measures sought advice from experts at a meeting Tuesday, with some experts favoring a partial easing of restrictions first. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga is expected to announce a lifting of the emergency and subsequent plans later Tuesday.

If all measures are lifted, Japan will be entirely free of any emergency requirement for the first time since April. Government officials are preparing for the relaxed restrictions by instituting other plans such as vaccine passports and virus tests.

The emergency and other measures in all 27 prefectures expire at the end of September. Some experts want the state of emergency in 19 areas to be eased to a quasi-emergency first to ensure infections don't quickly rebound, and the government is reportedly considering the strategy.

AP

People gather at bars that are open and serving alcohol on an ally filled with bars and restaurants despite Tokyo government has requested businesses not to serve alcohol under the state of emergency Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2021, in Tokyo.

The emergency has mainly been in the form of requests for restaurants and bars to open for shorter hours and not serve alcohol. Governors in Osaka, Hyogo and Kyoto have said they plan to keep those requests in place while closely monitoring the virus situations.

Japan is eager to expand social and economic activities while balancing the need to prevent the next wave of infections. The government, which is in transition as the governing party chooses a replacement for Suga later this week, is under pressure to maintain effective virus strategies ahead of parliamentary elections in two months.

Health Minister Norihisa

## World Bank cuts Asia growth outlook

**BEIJING** (AP)—The World Bank on Tuesday cut its economic growth forecast for developing countries in East Asia due to the impact of the coronavirus's delta variant and called on governments to help the poor and small businesses avoid long-term damage.

Excluding China's unexpectedly strong growth, developing countries in East Asia should grow by 2.5% this year, down from a forecast of 4.4% in April, the Washington-based lender said in a report. It said China, the region's biggest economy, should expand by 8.5%.

The region is "suffering a reversal of fortune" after China, Vietnam and other governments contained coronavirus outbreaks last year, the bank said. It said business activity in Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines and other economies was improving but now is "showing signs of slowing down."

"The region is being hit hard by the COVID-19 Delta variant while many advanced economies are on a path to economic recovery," the World Bank said. "COVID-19 will reduce growth and increase inequality unless the scars are addressed and the opportunities grasped."

The region must increase vaccine production due to the unreliability of imports and high demand, the bank said. It said governments also need to use testing, tracing and isolation to contain infections and strengthen their health systems.

To prevent long-term economic damage, the bank said governments need to support productive companies and encourage new competitors, promote technology development and reduce trade barriers.

Countries also need to improve "social protection" by expanding access to "need-based assistance" for the poor, the bank said.

## N. Korea accuses US of hostility, continues weapons tests

**SEOUL, South Korea** (AP)—North Korea on Monday accused the United States of keeping up its "hostile policy" and demanded the Biden administration permanently end joint military exercises with South Korea even as it continued its recent streak of weapons tests apparently aimed at pressuring Washington and Seoul over slow nuclear diplomacy.

North Korean Ambassador Kim Song's comments on the last day of the U.N. General Assembly's annual high-level meeting came shortly after South Korea's military a North Korean firing into eastern waters.

The North's latest test, which followed two previous rounds of missile tests this month, indicated the country is returning to its tried-and-true technique of mixing weapons demonstrations and peace offers to wrest concessions amid long-stalled negotiations over its nuclear weapons program.

North Korea's neighbors said the weapon fired early Tuesday local time was a short-range missile and further details about the launch were being analyzed.

Speaking through a translator, Kim justified North Korea's development of a "war deterrent" as a necessity to defend against U.S. threats, and also accused South Korea of betraying inter-Korean peace agreements by prioritizing its Western ally over "national harmony."

He demanded that the United States "permanently" stop its military exercises with South Korea, which the North has traditionally described as invasion rehearsals, and end the deployment of U.S. strategic weapons if it wants to end the 1950-53 Korean War and "is really desirous of peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula."

# World

## WORLD BRIEFS

### 39 workers trapped in Canadian mine but evacuation underway

**SUDBURY, Ontario** (AP)—An operation was underway Monday to evacuate 39 miners trapped underground for more than 24 hours after a mechanical problem blocked the entrance shaft to a mine in northern Ontario. Mining company Vale said a rescue team had reached the workers, who were in several different ``refuges'' between 900 and 1,200 meters underground at the Totten Mine, west of Sudbury, Ontario. No one was injured, the company said. ``We expect everyone to reach the surface by tonight,'' Vale said in a statement. A statement from the United Steelworkers, the union that represents 30 of the 39 workers trapped in the mine, said it was cautiously optimistic that all would be safely evacuated.

### Uncertain start to post-Merkel era after close German vote

**BERLIN** (AP)—The party that narrowly beat outgoing German Chancellor Angela Merkel's bloc pushed Monday for a quick agreement on a coalition government, but Europe's biggest economy could still be in for weeks of uncertainty after an election that failed to set a clear direction. Olaf Scholz, the candidate of the center-left Social Democrats, called for Merkel's center-right Union bloc to go into opposition after its worst-ever result in a national election. Both parties finished with well under 30% of the vote, and that appeared to put the keys to power in the hands of two opposition parties—raising questions over the stability of a future government. Armin Laschet, the Union's candidate, rejected the idea that the election gave any party a clear mandate and made clear he still hopes to lead a new government.


FIRST YEAR DEATH ANNIVERSARY

IN LOVING MEMORY

†Rose Marie Sonis Pangelinan Camacho

November 07, 1972 - October 08, 2020

We humbly invite all our relatives and friends
to join us in prayer as we commemorate the
1st Year Death Anniversary of our beloved †Rose.

Beginning Thursday, September 30, 2021
until Friday, October 8, 2021,
daily Mass of Intention will be at 6:00 p.m.
On Sunday, October 03, 2021,
Mass of Intention will be at 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, September 30, 2021 - San Roque Church
Friday, October 01, 2021 - Santa Remedios Church
Saturday, October 02, 2021 - Santa Remedios Church
Sunday, October 03, 2021 - Santa Remedios Church
Monday, October 04, 2021 - Santa Remedios Church
Tuesday, October 05, 2021 - San Roque Church
Wednesday, October 06, 2021 - Santa Remedios Church
Thursday, October 07, 2021 - San Roque Church
Friday, October 08, 2021- Santa Remedios Church

Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Kinisou Chapur, and Thank you

Anthony A. Camacho, Children, and Family

# Good Housekeeping

(SCOTT GABRIEL MORRIS/HANDOUT/TNS)
A simple piece of art is placed above a low headboard in a master bedroom.

By CATHY HOBBS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

# Decorating with brick walls

Do you love the look of an industrial space? Does the look of exposed brick captivate you? For those attracted to industrial spaces, exposed brick has high appeal. Even so, this industrial architecture feature does have its challenges. Often it is difficult to hang artwork or mirrors, and it may limit or restrict furniture layout.

Looking for the key to a successful design? Here are some top tips.

**1** Embrace it! Don't look to cover up or conceal. So many of those intimidated by exposed brick may look to cover with drywall, but it is best to let this unique industrial feature shine.

**2** Look for ways to highlight an exposed brick wall using non-hangable wall pieces such as leaning mirrors or oversized artwork that can be leaned.

**3** Try a masonry drill if committed to hanging a piece of art, cabinet or wall hanging. You can often create a hole in between bricks.

**4** Consider using black-and-white prints as opposed to painted canvases. These prints often work well in industrial spaces.

**5** Experiment with wallpaper. Wallpaper may be able to be used to add interest to a space and can be placed on top of exposed brick in many instances.

# Life & Style

## R&B superstar R. Kelly convicted in sex trafficking trial

**NEW YORK** (AP)—R. Kelly, the R&B superstar known for his anthem "I Believe I Can Fly," was convicted Monday in a sex trafficking trial after decades of avoiding criminal responsibility for numerous allegations of misconduct with young women and children.

A jury of seven men and five women found Kelly, 54, guilty of all nine counts, including racketeering, on their second day of deliberations. Kelly wore a face mask below black-rimmed glasses, remaining motionless with eyes downcast, as the verdict was read in federal court in Brooklyn.

Prosecutors alleged that the entourage of managers and aides who helped Kelly meet girls—and keep them obedient and quiet—amounted to a criminal enterprise. Two people have been charged with Kelly in a separate federal case pending in Chicago.

He faces the possibility of decades in prison for crimes including violating the Mann Act, an anti-sex trafficking law that prohibits taking anyone across state lines "for any immoral purpose." Sentencing is scheduled for May 4.

One of Kelly's lawyers, Deveraux Cannick, said he was disappointed and hoped to appeal.

"I think I'm even more disappointed the government brought the case in the first place, given all the inconsistencies," Cannick said.

Several accusers testified in lurid detail during the trial, alleging that Kelly subjected them to perverse and sadistic whims when they were underage.

For years, the public and news media seemed to be more amused than horrified by allegations of inappropriate relationships with minors, starting with Kelly's illegal marriage to the R&B phenom Aaliyah in 1994 when she was just 15.

This photo from Friday May 9, 2008, shows R. Kelly arriving for the first day of jury selection in his child pornography trial at the Cook County Criminal Courthouse in Chicago. AP

His records and concert tickets kept selling. Other artists continued to record his songs, even after he was arrested in 2002 and accused of making a recording of himself sexually abusing and urinating on a 14-year-old girl.

Widespread public condemnation didn't come until a widely watched docuseries, "Surviving R. Kelly," helped make his case a signifier of the #MeToo era, and gave voice to accusers who wondered if their stories were previously ignored because they were Black women.

"To the victims in this case, your voices were heard and justice was finally served," Acting U.S. Attorney Jacquelyn Kasulis said Monday.

Gloria Allred, a lawyer for some of Kelly's accusers, said outside the courthouse that of all the predators she's gone after—a list including Harvey Weinstein and Jeffrey Epstein—"Mr. Kelly is the worst."

At the trial, several of Kelly's accusers testified without using their real names to protect their privacy. Jurors were shown homemade videos of Kelly engaging in sex acts that prosecutors said were not consensual.

The defense labeled the accusers "groupies" and "stalkers."

Kelly's lawyer, Cannick, questioned why women stayed in relationships with Kelly if they thought they were being exploited.

## Global Citizen Live generates $1.1 billion to fight poverty

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Global Citizen Live, a 24-hour concert that featured performances from Stevie Wonder, Jennifer Lopez, BTS and Elton John and dozens of other stars, raised more than $1.1 billion in commitments and pledges over the weekend to fight extreme poverty.

Broadcasting from sites on six continents, including New York's Central Park and in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Global Citizen also secured pledges from France for 60 million COVID-19 vaccine doses for developing countries and corporate pledges for planting 157 million trees around the world.

Vaccine pledges, which also came from the governments of Croatia and Ireland, followed numerous pleas, including from Prince Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, onstage at Central Park on Saturday afternoon.

"This year, the world is expected to produce enough doses to meet the target of vaccinating 70% of people in every single country," Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, said to cheers from the Central Park crowd. "But it is wrong that so much of the vaccine supply has only gone to just 10 wealthy nations so far, and not everyone else."

The U.S. government pledged $295 million for humanitarian needs around the world caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Major philanthropic commitments came from the Lego Foundation, who pledged $150 million to support UNICEF and other partners working with children, and Rotary International, which pledged $98 million in grant funding in 2022.

The event featured numerous music collaborations, including Billie Eilish and Finneas joining Coldplay in New York and Charlie Puth joining Elton John in Paris, but joint efforts took places offstage as well. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and a private foundation teamed up to launch a $50 million fund to support the United Nations Population Fund. The CIFF also committed $50 million to UNICEF to fund child nutrition projects.

Namati, The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation collectively committed $20 million as seed funding to launch the Legal Empowerment Fund, which they hope will help raise $100 million over 10 years to support the justice movement.

Hugh Evans, CEO of Global Citizen, told The Associated Press that the 24-hour event was needed because

## Johnny Ramone's guitar sells for more than $900,000

**BOSTON** (AP)—The guitar played by Johnny Ramone on all 15 Ramones albums and at nearly 2,000 live performances by the rock band sold at auction over the weekend for more than $900,000, the auctioneer said Monday.

The 1965 Mosrite Ventures II electric guitar was bought by a collector in the U.S. who wishes to remain anonymous, Boston-based RR Auction said in a statement.

Ramone, whose real name was John Cummings, bought the guitar to replace his original blue Ventures II, which was stolen, according to RR Auction.

It was played at every Ramones performance from November 1977 until his retirement in August 1996, RR said. He died in 2004.

The guitar, along with other Ramones memorabilia, came from the collection of Daniel Rey, a musician and producer who was also a longtime Ramones collaborator.

Some of the other items sold included Johnny Ramone's Mark-2 signature guitar for almost $50,000, and Joey Ramone's Shure microphones from the final Ramones concert for more than $13,000.

The auction began Aug. 24 and concluded Saturday.

## Filth threatens early end to rekindled relationship

**DEAR ABBY**: I recently got back in touch with an old flame from 12 years ago. We never dated in the past because he was an alcoholic and not in a good place. A month ago, he added me on Snapchat, and we picked up right where we left off. He has been sober for three years, has a steady job, a house and a good support system. We spend hours on the phone and have a lot in common. I was excited to see if our friendship would evolve into something more, and he also wanted to see if we could be more than friends.

Abby, I went over to his house and it is filthy. It's not cluttered, just dirty—like it needs a very good deep cleaning. He has a large dog in the house, so the place smells very bad. I wouldn't sit down on any of the furniture, and I couldn't wait to get out of there. What do I do? Do I tell him how I feel about his house and see if he's willing to change, or must I end the relationship we are starting to build? I don't want to settle, but I don't want to miss out on what could turn into a wonderful relationship.

PUT OFF IN IOWA

**DEAR PUT OFF: It is entirely possible that this man doesn't realize how dirty his home, furniture and dog have become because he is used to living that way. You have no choice but to tell him he needs a cleaning crew for his home on a regular basis, and his dog needs to be bathed and groomed regularly for the sake of the health of the animal. If he's willing to listen to you, it could turn into a wonderful relationship. If he isn't, it's better to find out now, don't you think?**

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY**: I recently began talking to this woman online. We met on an app and have a lot in common, including that our fathers have had or currently have cancer. One night we got into a discussion about depression. I mentioned that in the past I have been suicidal, and she admitted she has felt that way, too. She tells me she thinks about ending her life a lot. I've told her about suicide hotlines and numbers to text someone.

The other night, she said she had started writing her suicide note. She wants to die after her father and her cats die. I'm trying to help her, but it's like she doesn't want my help. She has my number, and I urge her to text me whenever she needs to. We don't live close, so I can't just go to her house and check on her. If she does take her life, I don't know how I could go on, feeling I didn't do more to help her. I don't know what to do anymore.

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

### DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

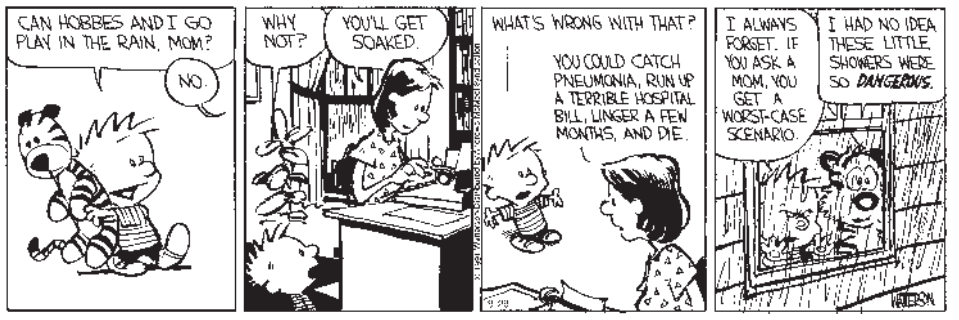
**DEAR DON'T KNOW: You have given this woman a willing ear, emotional support and information that can help her if she chooses to use it. You have NOTHING to feel guilty about. In the final analysis, the person who must "save" her is herself. Continue to offer support from afar. Give her the toll-free number of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-8255. Your conscience should be clear. For your own sake, please keep it that way.**

*Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)*

# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

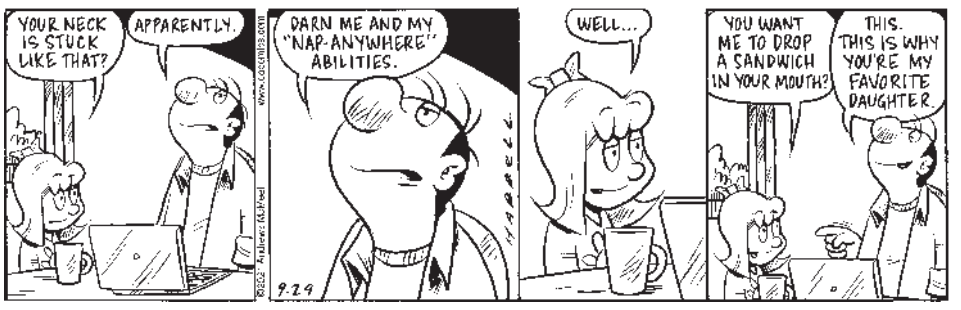

CAN HOBBES AND I GO PLAY IN THE RAIN, MOM?
NO.
WHY NOT?
YOU'LL GET SOAKED.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
YOU COULD CATCH PNEUMONIA, RUN UP A TERRIBLE HOSPITAL BILL, LINGER A FEW MONTHS, AND DIE.
I ALWAYS FORGET. IF YOU ASK A MOM, YOU GET A WORST-CASE SCENARIO.
I HAD NO IDEA THESE LITTLE SHOWERS WERE SO DANGEROUS.

## Garfield®

By Jim Davis

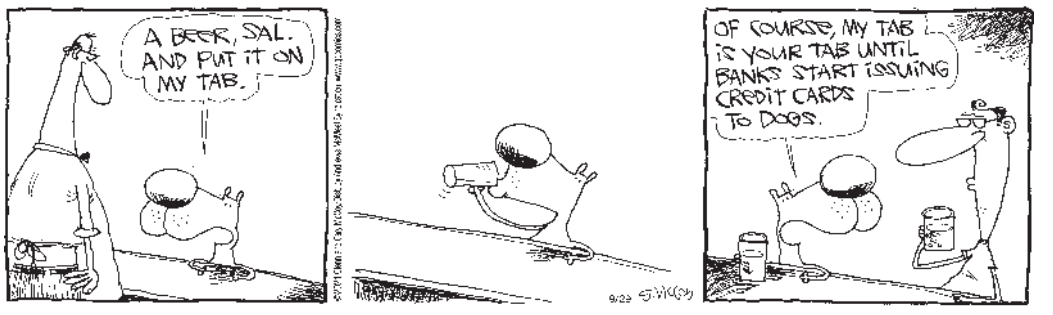
## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


YOUR NECK IS STUCK LIKE THAT?
APPARENTLY.
DARN ME AND MY "NAP-ANYWHERE" ABILITIES.
WELL...
YOU WANT ME TO DROP A SANDWICH IN YOUR MOUTH?
THIS. THIS IS WHY YOU'RE MY FAVORITE DAUGHTER.

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy




## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

**ACROSS**

1 Buckle
5 Mauna —
8 Eve's man
12 Peek suffix
13 Dijon denial
14 Clear the decks?
15 Pot sticker
17 Antitoxins
18 "Cut that out!"
19 Libra symbols
21 Astern
22 Follow
23 Wee bit
26 Aviv preceder
28 Ecstasy
31 Mosque leader
33 Sinbad's bird
35 Cinch
36 Director Elia
38 Legislation
40 Transcript no.
41 Go fast
43 Earl Grey, for one
45 Ritzy beach city
47 Arm's-length pic
51 Tag sale words
52 Pond youngster
54 Cooped (up)
55 "CSI" evidence
56 Pond growth
57 Droops
58 Feminine side
59 Must have

**DOWN**

1 Bankrolls
2 Border on
3 QB Tony
4 Dad
5 Yarn shop customer
6 Very long time
7 Uneasy feeling
8 Sets upon
9 Abode
10 Bern's river
11 New corp. hires
16 Boost
20 Taxi
23 "— Tok" (Kesha hit song)
24 Docs' bloc
25 Brilliant
27 Online guffaw
29 Enervate
30 Hotel amenity
32 Zedong followers
34 MRI's kin
37 San Francisco's — Hill
39 Calendar row
42 Confuse
44 Poe's middle name
45 Atlas pages
46 Cruising
48 Dossier
49 Playwright William
50 "Zounds!"
53 Half of bi-

**Solution time: 23 mins.**

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R | U | E | S | ■ | G | A | Y | ■ | S | A | R | A |
| E | B | B | S | ■ | J | S | E | ■ | E | G | A | N |
| S | E | A | N | B | E | A | N | ■ | A | E | R | O |
| T | R | Y | ■ | I | S | P | ■ | I | B | S | E | N |
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| G | R | A | B | ■ | L | I | Z | ■ | E | T | E | S |
| T | O | ■ | E | B | A | G | ■ | A | Z | U | R | E |
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| B | R | O | N | X | ■ | A | L | ■ | A | M | O | ■ |
| R | A | G | A | ■ | S | N | A | C | K | B | A | R |
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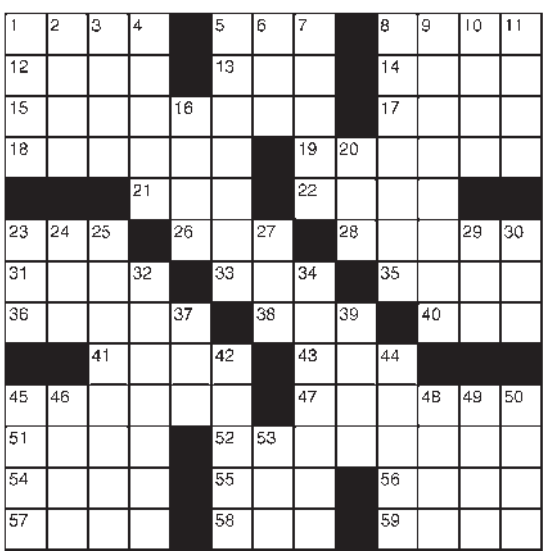
Yesterday's answer 9-29



**STUMPED?** For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Kevin Durant, 33; Roger Bart, 59; Bryant Gumbel, 73; Jerry Lee Lewis, 86.

**Happy Birthday:** Look at every angle before you make a move. Putting caution first will save you from spending your time backtracking. A steady pace forward with comprehensive checklists will ensure that you make the most of your time. Communication will be crucial if you want to eliminate opposition from someone close to you. Focus on what's possible. Your numbers are 9, 14, 22, 26, 29, 35, 44.

**ARIES** *(March 21-April 19):* Pick your target and stay on track. Refuse to let emotional matters distract you. A disciplined approach to your pursuits will help you overcome an intrusion you encounter. Don't share personal information that can be used against you. ✪✪

**TAURUS** *(April 20-May 20):* Don't let what others do rule your life. When uncertainty sets in, consider what you want to do instead of letting others call the shots. Live your dream, focus on what makes you happy and eliminate what doesn't work for you anymore. ✪✪✪✪

**GEMINI** *(May 21-June 20):* Set the standard, run the show and invest in your ability to lead the way. Show your dedication by leaving nothing to chance and striving to reach your target without an emotional stumble. Let go of the past, and embrace the future. ✪✪✪

**CANCER** *(June 21-July 22):* Let your mind wander and your instincts take over. Step out of the line of fire if someone unjustly targets you. Know when to speak up and when to keep the information a secret. Pay attention to detail, and stick to a budget. ✪✪✪

**LEO** *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Take care of what matters without complaining. Refrain from making changes that aren't necessary. Pitch in and help a friend or relative going through uncertain times. Handle sensitive issues with reassurance and support. Stick to a lifestyle you can afford. ✪✪✪

**VIRGO** *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* A mix-up will occur if you let your emotions spin out of control. Put an emphasis on how you present who you are and what you have to offer. A change will turn out better than anticipated; don't fear it. ✪✪✪✪

**LIBRA** *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Don't react prematurely. Let others do as they please, and you'll discover the best way to fit into a situation that is causing you concern. Observation and knowledge will give you the power to do what's best for you. ✪✪

**SCORPIO** *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Keep emotions in check, and take better care of yourself emotionally and physically. Do something that brings you joy and satisfaction. A creative project will ease your mind and help you gain perspective and encourage you to implement positive change. Romance is featured. ✪✪✪✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Fix up your surroundings, but don't go over budget. Use your intelligence, and you will find ways to work with what you have instead of spending on something unnecessary. A discussion with someone inspiring will prompt you to follow your heart. ✪✪✪

**CAPRICORN** *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Premature actions will cause emotional turmoil. Rethink your plans; you'll find cheaper ways to improve your life without upsetting loved ones or taking on debt. Be smart and put your energy where it counts. A partnership looks promising. ✪✪✪

**AQUARIUS** *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Keep life simple; know when to say no, and don't make an unnecessary change because someone else does. Put your energy into personal improvement, taking better care of yourself. Start a creative project. ✪✪✪

**PISCES** *(Feb. 19-March 20):* You are heading in the right direction. Make a couple of changes based on the information you gather, and it will be easier to finish what you start without facing opposition. Share your intentions and plans with someone. ✪✪✪✪✪

**Birthday Baby:** You are sensitive, unpredictable and talkative. You are assertive and original.

*✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.*

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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## SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 4 | 2 | | | | |
| | | | 7 | | 5 | 4 | | |
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| 7 | | | | | 9 | | | 2 |
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| 2 | 1 | | 9 | | | | 5 | |
| | | 9 | | | | 3 | | |
| | | 4 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 2 | |

Difficulty Level ★★★ 9/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

**Yesterday's Answer**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 6 |
| 9 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 8 |
| 4 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| 3 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| 5 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 1 |
| 8 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 7 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 9 |

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## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

CHECKERED TABLECLOTHS — Solution: 7 letters

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | R | Y | E | U | C | E | B | R | A | B | R | A | N | D |
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| C | N | O | D | E | X | E | O | T | E | K | N | A | L | B |
| D | W | O | V | E | N | M | A | H | G | N | I | G | P | B |

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Accent, Barbecue, Beach, Black, Blanket, Blend, Blues, Brand, Brown, Carded, Casual, Cookout, Cotton, Desk, Dine, Drape, Fabric, Formal, Gingham, Grill, Home, Kitchen, Linens, Lunch, Ocean, Orange, Oval, Pale, Park, Pattern, Picnic, Pink, Plaid, Plan, Plastic, Polyester, Rectangle, Reds, Relax, Round, Runner, Size, Table, Texture, Versatile, Woven, Yarns, Yellow

**Yesterday's Answer: Ankara**

Treasuries 23 through 43 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

# White Sox hold off Tigers with 8-7 win after benches clear

Detroit Tigers and Chicago White Sox benches clear in the ninth inning of a baseball game in Detroit, Monday, Sept. 27, 2021. AP

**DETROIT** (AP)—Eloy Jiménez hit a two-run home run, Yasmani Grandal homered to spark a six-run fourth inning and the AL Central champion Chicago White Sox held off the Detroit Tigers in a testy 8-7 win on Monday.

The benches cleared after Chicago first baseman Jose Abreu and Detroit shortstop Niko Goodrum exchanged words when Abreu was tagged out attempting to steal second base in the ninth.

Abreu had been hit by a pitch from Alex Lange one inning after the Tigers' Isaac Paredes was hit by a pitch. There were no ejections regarding the altercation, though White Sox bench coach Miguel Cairo was tossed for arguing after Abreu was hit.

Chicago manager Tony La Russa insinuated that Abreu was plunked intentionally.

"It seems they have issues when someone plays aggressively but not when they pitch aggressively and beyond the limits," he said. "The game is played two ways, not just one way."

Lange said he wasn't trying to hit Abreu in a one-run game.

"He's leaning out over the plate. He sees I'm working away," Lange said. "Our report says finish up-and-in and that's where I was going. Obviously, it wasn't intentional. I'm pitching to my report."

Tigers manager A.J. Hinch backed up Lange's claim.

"If you throw it out over the plate, he destroys you. We threw it inside and it hit him," he said. "He went in aggressively into second, (a) little old-school with the slide. Tensions got high, emotions got high and we're all out on the field. .. I don't think they hit us on purpose and I don't think we hit them on purpose. Emotions just boiled over."

Abreu, who had only one steal attempt this season prior to Monday, slid past the bag. But winning pitcher Dallas Keuchel didn't feel Abreu figuratively crossed the line.

"I thought the slide was hard at second base but it was a good slide," he said. "Now, any time somebody slides hard into second base it's always taken into consideration."

Abreu, who has been hit by a pitch 21 times this season, was not made available to the media.

Jimenez reached base four times and scored two runs. Cesar Hernandez and Zack Collins drove in two runs apiece in the makeup of a game postponed last Wednesday because of rain.

Keuchel (9-9) gave up two runs on seven hits in five innings. Liam Hendriks pitched the ninth, giving up one hit, for his 37th save.

Jonathan Schoop homered for the Tigers, who had defeated Chicago in their last four meetings. Eric Haase had a two-run single and Niko Goodrum supplied a two-run triple during the Tigers' five-run eighth.

Matt Manning (4-7) issued a career-high five walks while allowing six runs in 3 1/3 innings.

Detroit trailed 8-2 prior to the eighth-inning outburst. Schoop hit a sacrifice fly after the run-scoring hits by Haase and Goodrum. The Tigers had runners at the corners with two out before reliever Garrett Crochet retired Zack Short on a foul pop.

La Russa called it one of the better wins of the season.

"It is very difficult to get your body to feel good enough to compete as well as we did," he said. "The only way they did was mentally they reached down as deep and as tough as we have all year."

## Reds 13, Pirates 1

In Cincinnati, Joey Votto homered twice and drove in four runs, and the Cincinnati Reds pounded the Pittsburgh Pirates 13-1 on Monday to stay alive in the race for the second NL wild card.

Nick Castellanos, rookie Jonathan India and Eugenio Suarez also connected as Cincinnati (82-75) posted its fourth straight victory, clinching a second straight winning season. Castellanos had five RBIs, and India finished with four hits and scored four times.

"I'd be lying if I said Nick and I weren't competing. Competition is in our nature. When he drives in runs it doesn't affect me. I still have my chances," Votto said. "I'm taking more chances and with that comes more outs but I knew I could hit more home runs and drive in more runs."

The Reds pulled within 5 1/2 games of idle St. Louis for the second wild card. The Cardinals (87-69) need just one more win to secure the spot.

"It is tough to see anything when your overall goal is to make the postseason," manager David Bell said of the team's winning record. "Maybe when it's all over we can enjoy the winning season."

The 38-year-old Votto made a successful return to the lineup after missing two games with a sore left knee.

## Nationals 5, Rockies 4

In Denver, Josiah Gray pitched into the sixth inning to earn his second career win, and the Washington Nationals beat the Colorado Rockies 5-4 on Monday night.

Luis García hit a two-run single and Alcides Escobar had three hits for the Nationals.

Gray (2-2), who made his major league debut with the Dodgers on July 20, has won consecutive starts. "I felt like he got tired at the end," Washington manager Dave Martinez said. "He threw the ball well early on, he threw the ball fantastic, had everything working, he just got tired at the end."

The prized right-hander was acquired July 30 in the blockbuster trade that sent Max Scherzer and Trea Turner to Los Angeles. Gray got his first win at Miami last Wednesday when he struck out eight Marlins.

He allowed just two hits through five innings Monday but loaded the bases in the sixth with two walks and a single. Ryan McMahon's double to center field cleared the bases and cut Washington's lead to 4-3.

"I want to be pitching for years and years and it won't be the first time I'm throwing with baserunners on," Gray said. "It's something you do, you take the punches as you can and you go out and make the pitches."

## Mariners 13, Athletics 4

In Seattle, Mitch Haniger hit two identical three-run homers and the Seattle Mariners gained precious ground in the AL wild-card race with a 13-4 win over the Oakland Athletics on Monday night.

Seattle's 10th straight victory against Oakland tied the team record for most consecutive wins against a single opponent. The Mariners have won eight of nine overall and nine of their last 11.

"We're fighting for that spot," starting pitcher Chris Flexen said. "We want it and we're playing like we want it."

Seattle is 1 1/2 games behind Boston for the second wild card, with Toronto a game back of the Red Sox. Both those teams were off Monday.

"We've got five games left and here we sit," Mariners manager Scott Servais said. "This is some kind of season we've had and we've still got a lot to play for, so we'll see what tomorrow brings."

Oakland fell 3 1/2 games behind Boston and two back of the Mariners with two more games to play in Seattle. The A's, last year's AL West champions, also were eliminated from the division race.

Haniger hit his first three-run homer to the bullpen in left field during a five-run fourth inning, then put the game away with his second shot to nearly the same spot in the sixth. He has 37 homers this season after sitting out for 18 months following two surgeries.

## Indians 8, Royals 3

In Cleveland, Amed Rosario went 4-for-5 with three RBIs as the Cleveland Indians defeated the visiting Kansas City Royals 8-3 on Monday afternoon in a makeup game from a Sept. 22 rainout.

It was the final away contest for the Royals (71-85), who finished 20-15 on the road after the All-Star break after a 15-31 road record before the break.

Kansas City's Salvador Perez was 2-for-4 and drove in two runs, raising his major league-leading total to 117 RBIs.

The Indians (77-79) concluded the home portion of their schedule at 40-41. The top two batters in their lineup—Myles Straw and Rosario—went 6-for-10 with four runs scored

# Braun retires with Brews legacy that includes MVP, drug ban

**MILWAUKEE** (AP)—Ryan Braun threw out the ceremonial first pitch before the Milwaukee Brewers' game Sunday as part of his farewell, a 30-minute celebration of a 14-year major league career that included the 2011 NL MVP award and a lengthy suspension for a drug violation.

Now 37, Braun hasn't played all season and said during spring training that he was leaning toward retirement. He announced on Sept. 14 that he would not play again.

"My emotions today and over the last few weeks have admittedly been very mixed," he said during a news conference before the game. "It starts with overwhelming gratitude and joy, but there is also a real sadness that it's over, that this has actually come to an end."

A six-time All-Star, Braun played his entire big league career with the Brewers from 2007-20.

"Thank you for picking me up when I fell down," Braun told the appreciative crowd.

The ceremony came before the NL Central-leading Brewers hosted the New York Mets.

Braun won division titles in 2011 and '18 but never reached the World Series. He had a .296 career average with 1,963 hits in 1,766 games.

"It's very rare in today's game for any athlete to have that chance," Braun said of playing for just one team. "I feel incredibly blessed and incredibly fortunate that it worked out that way."

Braun is the franchise leader in home runs with (352) and second in RBIs (1,154), extra-base hits (809), total bases (3,525) and doubles (408).

"What was special was his consistency," owner Mark Attanasio said.

The Brewers declined their half of the mutual option in Braun's contract for 2021, paying him a $4 million buyout rather than the $15 million he would have received. Braun flirted with the notion of returning to the Brewers during the 2021 season.

"We discussed it, multiple times," Braun said. "We discussed it throughout the course of the season. Both in July and August, we had pretty serious conversations about it. It never got to the point where like I felt it was imminent."

He was suspended in 2011 for 50 games for violating baseball's drug agreement but the players' association successfully overturned the penalty, persuading arbitratoir Shyam Das that protocols for the chain of custody for the sample were not followed.

Braun was suspended in July 2013 for the final 65 games of the season for violations of the drug program and labor contract following baseball's investigation of the Biogenesis of America anti-aging clinic. He issued a statement then that said: "I am not perfect. I realize now that I have made some mistakes. I am willing to accept the consequences of those actions."

"Certainly, as I reflect on my career, it was not perfect, and I am at peace with that," he said Sunday. "If I had the opportunity to go back and do some things differently, I absolutely would, but I don't have that chance."

# Prescott, Cowboys beat Eagles in 1st home game since injury

AP

Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott (4) and center Tyler Biadasz (63) celebrate a touchdown scored by Dalton Schultz in the second half of an NFL football game against the Philadelphia Eagles in Arlington, Texas, Monday, Sept. 27, 2021.

**ARLINGTON, Texas** (AP)— Dak Prescott ran toward the tunnel, raising his arms to the fans and tossing them souvenirs after the Dallas Cowboys manhandled the Philadelphia Eagles in prime time.

The scene was a stark contrast to almost a year earlier, when the star quarterback was in tears as he rode on a cart through the same spot after the gruesome ankle injury that ended his season.

Prescott threw for three touchdowns in his first home game since the injury, Trevon Diggs returned an interception 59 yards for a score and the Cowboys beat the Eagles 41-21 on Monday night.

"Just thankful for everything that I've been through, all of the hard work that made me account for just to be back out here doing what I love," Prescott said. "It's the greatest place to play football."

Ezekiel Elliott ran for a season-high 95 yards and two touchdowns, and tight end Dalton Schultz had the first two-TD game of his career.

Except for a fumble in the end zone that gave the Eagles (1-2) their first touchdown, Prescott was efficient, going 21 of 26 for 238 yards without an interception in the first NFC East game for both teams.

Prescott's first game at AT&T Stadium since the season-ending compound fracture and dislocation of his right ankle in Week 5 last year against the New York Giants was also the return to full capacity after the pandemic-imposed limits last season. There were 93,267 fans inside with the retractable roof open at the $1.2 billion facility.

"A guy like Dak, he's going to be psyched regardless," Elliott said. "There's not any extra he can get besides just the competitor he is, the player he is."

The Cowboys (2-1) had a 19-1 edge in first downs late in the first half, but the Eagles were down just 20-7 at the break. After Javon Hargrave forced Prescott's fumble and caught the ball for the score, the Eagles stuffed the QB on a fourth-down sneak at the other end.

Diggs stepped in front of a pass from Hurts to the sideline on the third play of the second half and ran untouched for his first career TD while becoming the first Dallas player with a pick in each of the first three games since Everson Walls in 1985.

Diggs and Cincinnati's Logan Wilson share the NFL lead with three interceptions.

Hurts had completions of 41 yards to Quez Watkins, 38 yards to tight end Dallas Goedert and 27 yards to tight end Zach Ertz while finishing 25 of 39 for 326 yards with two TDs and two interceptions. Plenty of the Texas native's passing yards, and the second TD, came with the game out of reach.

"I didn't do a good enough job of leading," Hurts said. "I didn't do a good enough of running our offense, doing the things I need to do. This one's on me."

Prescott's 19-yard touchdown pass to Schultz put the Cowboys ahead for good at 14-7 late in the first quarter, and a 2-yarder to Cedrick Wilson on fourth down essentially put the game away at 34-14 early in the fourth.

Any doubt was erased when rookies Micah Parsons and Osa Odighizuwa shared a sack of Hurts on a desperation try on fourth-and-9 midway through the fourth quarter. Odighizuwa had his first career sack in the first half, dropping Hurts for an 11-yard loss.

Schultz, who led Dallas with 80 yards receiving, scored again on a 22-yarder in the fourth quarter.

Tony Pollard added 60 yards rushing on 11 carries as the Cowboys finished with 160 yards on the ground against the NFL's No. 2 run defense.

"They had a good game plan to run the ball, we were second and 4, second and 3," Eagles defensive tackle Fletcher Cox said. "One thing we're known for is stopping the run. We couldn't get off the field."

Jimmy Johnson, who coached the Cowboys to a pair of Super Bowl titles in the 1990s, made a rare appearance on their home field when he was presented his Pro Football Hall of Fame ring at halftime along with safety Cliff Harris and receiver Drew Pearson. All three were inducted this summer.

Johnson started his speech by thanking owner Jerry Jones and ended it with the famous line he first shouted after an NFC championship game win over San Francisco during the 1992 season: "How 'bout them Cowboys!" Johnson and Jones split acrimoniously after another Super Bowl title to finish the 1993 season. The two hugged before Jones put the ring on Johnson.

# NFL's greatest toes on turf off to a memorable start in '21

By ARNIE STAPLETON
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Matt Prater came up short and paid the price, not once but twice.

His attempt to break his own record for longest field goal in NFL history — a 64-yarder in Denver's thin air eight years ago — backfired Sunday when a former teammate returned his missed 68-yard attempt in Jacksonville's heavy air a record-tying 109 yards for a touchdown on the last play of the first half.

Prater's third-quarter field goal from half that distance ignited the Cardinals' comeback from a 13-7 halftime deficit that sent the Jaguars to their 18th consecutive loss.

But his record fell anyway.

A thousand miles north, in Detroit's climate controlled Ford Field, where Prater plied his craft for the last seven seasons, Baltimore's Justin Tucker, the most accurate kicker in league history, lined up at his own 40-yard line with three seconds left.

His holder was at the Ravens' 44, and the snapper at the Lions 48 after some heroics by Lamar Jackson and a little help from the officiating crew.

Tucker's attempt from 66 yards out bounced over the crossbar as time expired to send the Ravens to an electric 19-17 win over the Lions.

"That one was more like a kickoff," said Tucker, who hop-stepped on his way to blasting the ball from his own 44. "It's like you're a competitor in a long-drive contest. You just let it rip and hope it stays straight."

Prater's league record that had stood for 2,850 days came crumbling down. Although he no longer holds the record for longest field goal, a 64-yarder against the Titans on Dec. 8, 2013, Prater does own the longest field goal for three franchises: Cardinals (62 yards), Lions (63) and Broncos (64).

Kickers have never been this clutch this early, but Kliff Kingsbury having Prater attempt a 68-yarder in Florida was a stretch.

Jamal Agnew returned the miss 109 yards for a touchdown, breaking two tackles and eluding another before sweeping past Prater over the final 10 yards.

"That's about as big a moment of adversity as you can face in an NFL football game, to have something like that happen right before the half," Kingsbury said after the Cardinals improved to 3-0 for the first time since 2015. "Guys didn't blink. Even when we went down two scores, guys didn't blink. I was really proud of that effort."

Three other games were decided on last-second field goals in addition to Tucker's record-breaker in Week 3.

—Daniel Carlson, whose missed extra point allowed the Dolphins to send the game into overtime, won it with a 22-yarder as time expired to keep the Raiders unbeaten and tied with Denver atop the topsy-turvy AFC West.

—Younghoe Koo's 40-yarder as the clock hit zero sent the Falcons past the winless Giants at MetLife Stadium, a short drive from where he played high school ball in Ridgewood, New Jersey.

—The day the kickers ruled the NFL came to a close Sunday night when Mason Crosby's 51-yarder as time expired gave Green Bay a 30-28 win over the 49ers at breezy Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California.

Altogether, there have been 10 go-ahead field goals in the final 10 seconds of regulation or overtime this season. That's the most through Week 3 since the 1970 merger.

Though not game-winners, Denver's Brandon McManus (14 points), Cleveland's Chase McLaughlin (14 points) and Minnesota's Greg Joseph (12 points) also had monster performances Sunday.

Even in this day and age of the prolific passing games, a good share of games every week come down to the greatest toes on turf.

And a little luck.

Here's the rub for the Lions — and for Prater — the back judge missed a delay of game penalty on the snap before Tucker's record-breaking field goal that would have backed up the Ravens 5 yards and taken Tucker out of his range.

After throwing a 36-yard pass to Sammy Watkins on fourth-and-19 from his own 16, Jackson spiked the ball to stop the clock with 7 seconds left. TV footage suggested the play clock expired by nearly 2 seconds before the snap on the next play, an incompletion.

"We'll get an apology and it doesn't mean anything," said Lions' first-year coach Dan Campbell, who fell to 0-3.

Tucker—who made a 61-yard kick to beat the Lions in Baltimore's previous visit to Detroit eight years ago — then came out and made the record-breaking field goal.

"I love Detroit," Tucker said. "I'm thinking about getting a place here."

# Sikkel, Batallones pace 1,000m race

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Moshe Sikkel and Maria Batallones topped the 1,000m race of Saipan Swim Club's final Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series held last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe.

Swimming for SSC, Sikkel touched the flag in 14:01.14 to rule the men's division. He was followed by Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Andrew Nunez who timed in at 14:36.17. SSC's Michael Miller completed the Top 3 in 14:59.66.

Sikkel said winning the final 1,000m competition of the Triple Crown series came as a surprise for him.

"I started my race really fast because I wanted to stay close to my closest competitors. Andrew beat me in the first two races and I wasn't expecting to out-swim him in this one. I am happy with my first place and to be honest I had absolutely no idea that was going to happen," he said.

Nunez said he was just happy that the open water race pushed through considering there was inclement weather days before.

"Considering that the previous couple days provided uncertainty with news of a tropical storm, seeing that the ocean water was at tranquility brought much inspiration and determination upon me. Through this, I was able to reach my goal of finishing strong and receiving another silver medal. However, none of this would have been possible without my Tsunami team and our efficient teamwork for each other. Thank you to all the organizers, coaches, and parents who supported us and made this monumental event of the Triple Crown race possible," he said.

After missing the first two open water races, Miller was just content to catch the last bus and was delighted to have placed.

"My game plan was to try my best. I missed the first two races and didn't expect to get third place in this one. The race was harder than I expected, but I am happy with my result," he said.

Batallones was far and away the best swimmer in the 1,000m race, including not only the men in the same distance but also the women's in the qualifiers, as she submitted a time of 13.55.66. Teammates Sari Barman and Jessica Ma were second and third at 16:24.32 and 16:58.07, respectively.

Batallones said she's just glad that she finished the open water series strong.

"Saturday's race was the final race of the series. I was happy with my results and glad the current and weather cooperated with us. I think my teammates and I finished strong. I am glad we were all able to complete this and have fun. Fun because we were all able to participate and support each other along the way. Putting effort is very important in these kind of events, so seeing everyone's effort was nice. I hope to see more of these in the future," she said.

MARK RABAGO

From right, Saipan Swim Club's Moshe Sikkel, Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Andrew Nunez, and SSC's Michael Miller, finished 1-2-3 in the 1,000m race of Saipan Swim Club's Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series held last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe.

MARK RABAGO

From right, Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Maria Batallones, Sari Barman, and Jessica Ma finished 1-2-3 in the 1,000m race of Saipan Swim Club's Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series held last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe.

Barman admitted that the final open water series was very exhausting, but was thrilled to finish runner-up to Batallones.

"The last ocean swim was very tiring. I got really tired after going through the third buoy. But I knew that I had to kick, stroke, and pace myself a bit more seriously. At last, I didn't expect myself to get second place in girls. Even though most of the boys beat me, I was still proud of myself. Overall the ocean swim was very fun and exciting."

Ma said all throughout the swim she was reminded of Tsunami Saipan coach Hiro Kimura's marching orders to his swimmers.

"I would like to thank my coach for pushing me to train hard everyday. Also my teammates for cheering me on. The course felt a bit longer than the one last time, so it was a bit harder. I felt really tired after that race. But I know I did good, and my coach always tells me 'hard work pays off!'"

Results of the 500m, 100m, 50m, and 25m open water races will be published in next issues of the *Saipan Tribune*.

# SSHS 1 finally wins; GCA 1 now 5-0

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Saipan Southern High School 1 finally won a game after beating Mount Carmel School 2 in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season's makeup matches last Monday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

It was a rare Monday schedule for NMIVA's 6x6 high school volleyball league after Tropical Depression 20W cancelled games last Thursday. The Lady Manta Rays 1 lifted itself out of the cellar after triumphing over the Lady Knights 2 in tight fashion, 25-21, 25-23. It was the first win in four games for SSHS 1, while MCS 2 fell to 2-3.

SSHS 1 is coached by Shawn Davis and her players are Brandie A. Matsumoto, Miley J. A. Salas, Jackilynn V. G. Sanchez, Mayvaleen A. Tesero, Lana A. Sunderland, Jasmine C. John, Jasmine K. M. Saluta, Yasmeen T. Younis, Tsuyako Omar, Nicole Villagomez, Hazel Efraim, and Casey C. Cruz.

In other results, Grace Christian Academy 1 continued its run toward a perfect season following a tough three-setter against sister team GCA 2. The Lady Eagles 1 probably underestimated GCA 2 in the second set, as they lost 25-14 after dominating the first set, 25-6. They stopped messing around in the rubber set, quickly disposing of their in-campus rivals, 15-3, to raise their record to 6-0. GCA 2 now sports a 3-2 record.

Saipan International School 1 improved to 5-1 following a 28-26, 25-17 hard-fought victory over MCS 1. The Lady Knights 1 are now 3-2. Other results in Monday's makeup games saw 4-1 MCS 3 get the better of 0-5 SSHS 3, 24-26, 25-21, 15-4; 3-2 MHS 2 beat 1-5 Kagman High School, 25-21, 25-22; and MHS 3 score its second win after a 25-20, 25-23 victory over winless SIS 2.

The NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season continued yesterday with SIS 2 taking on GCA 2 and MHS 1 squaring off against MCS 3 in the 4:30pm schedule. The 5:30pm second games then features SSHS 2 vs SSHS 1 and GCA 1 vs MHS 2. The final matches then pitted MCS 3 against SIS 1 and MCS 1 challenging MHS 3.

## CAST

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made the two goals for Kagman, which had only one win in three games in the pool play to bow out of contention.

In the battle for the top seed in Group B, Koblerville 1 edged Garapan 2, 4-3.

Moris Atalig recorded a hat-trick to help Koblerville 1 slip past Garapan 2, including the game-winning goal in the 38th minute. Napu Pangelinan scored the other goal for the Umangs, while Garapan 2 drew its goals from Debron Saures (two) and Kanoa Owens.

For the other Group B game, Gregorio T. Camacho downed Saipan Community School, 4-1, to notch a win in its last game of the season. Brandon Teigita scored all the four goals for GTC, while Maria Kaiyan Haberman-Smith made the lone goal for SCS.

Meanwhile, the quarterfinals matches will be played today with the following pairings: SIS vs San Vicente 2; Koblerville 1 vs WSR 2; Garapan 1 vs San Vicente 1; and GCA vs Garapan 2. Winners in today's matches will advance to the semis, which is set for Oct. 1, while the finals is scheduled for Oct. 6.

## ONOC

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Center and they were also impressed."

He, however, admitted that the organizing committee is a bit behind in the repairs for the Francisco "Tan'Ko" M. Palacios Baseball Field, which will host the baseball competition of the Mini Games.

"The challenge now is obviously the Oleai Sports Complex and ensuring the grants from the [Federal Emergency Management Agency] goes through and actually deliver what needs to be repaired such as resurfacing of the track and field and most importantly the baseball [field]."

Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, which will host badminton, will also finally be air-conditioned for the Mini Games.

Babauta also explained the venue change for weightlifting from Saipan World Resort to the Marianas High School Gymnasium,

"We expect the new air-conditioning system at MHS to be installed starting in November and completed by December. So that's going to be Mini Games-ready…Weightlifting will no longer be at Saipan World Resort after the international federation thought the original venue is not suitable because it lacks a warm-up area next to the stage and the overall ambiance is too narrow for the event."

Northern Marianas Sports Association executive director Carli Sablan said they are continuing to work with the Public Assistance Office to fast-track the repair of facilities at the Oleai Sports Complex, especially the baseball field.

"Our athletes need proper facilities and equipment to train in order to deliver their best during the Mini Games. It is our understanding that the design work is just about done and projects are soon to get off the ground," she said.

## DEV

*From Page 20*

and I beat the second placer. Unfortunately, Shuji cramped that's why he had to stop and that's why he was third place. It should be Shuji first, me second, and [Tomas] third," said the soft-spoken Bachani after the race.

He added that he almost felt that Monday's win was sort of payback for losing in the PSS/NMA Cross Country Qualifier two weeks ago after he and a few other elite runners miscalculated the turnaround.

"I guess [it's payback], but I still felt bad for Shuji because he should've won."

When asked what he would do with the $300 first place purse, Bachani said he would reinvest it into running. "[I'll] buy shoes. Any shoes I'm not sure."

Abel pocketed $200 for finishing runner-up and Kuroda went home with $100. The Tokyo, Japan native later said he didn't know there was prizemoney involved and jokingly uttered that he would've overcome his cramps if he knew $300 will go to the first place finisher. Abel, meanwhile, was overheard saying "Oh, to be young!" after asking race organizers how old the 16-year-old Bachani was.

Like Kuroda, Miller was also oblivious that there was prizemoney involved in the 5K sunset run. Nonetheless, she still gave it the old college try and topped the women's division in 19.00 flat. Saipan International School's Tiana Cabrera came in second in 20.03, while Lydia Tan completed the Top 3 in 22.23.

"I didn't know there was a prize. I really didn't know. I was surprised that I came first in the women. Even the prizemoney was a bigger surprise for me. That's a big surprise for me. What am I going to buy? Maybe new shoes?" Miller told *Saipan Tribune* after the race.

In the best Chamorro and Carolinian attire, Brad Ruszala was the lone entry and won $100. The contest was held in support of Cultural Heritage Month and recognized the significance of indigenous culture to tourism.

Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo congratulated all the winners of the Saipan portion of the World Tourism Day 5K Sunset Fun Runs. Races were also held on Tinian and Rota. She added that the fun run was the culminating event of MVA's celebration of the United Nations World Tourism Organization's World Tourism Day. In all, 65 runners took part in the race on Saipan.

Earlier in the day, businesses and other groups also participated in island beautification cleanups on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. In celebration of CNMI Museum Day, MVA also partnered with the Northern Mariana Islands Museum of History & Culture and offered free tours at the museum for Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically (MY WAVE) clubs and tourism partners.

White Sox hold off Tigers with 8-7 win after benches clear

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Sports

Sikkel, Batallones pace 1,000m race

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# Dev, Akiko top World Tourism Day 5K

MARK RABAGO

From left, Shuji Kuroda, Dev Bachani, Tomas Abel, Brad Ruszala, Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo, Tiana Cabrera, Akiko Miller, and Lydia Tan are all smiles after the awards ceremony of the Saipan portion of the World Tourism Day 5K Sunset Fun Runs at the Minachom Atdao Pavilion at Kilili Beach Park.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dev Bachani and Akiko Miller said they will be ordering new running shoes after topping the Saipan portion of the World Tourism Day 5K Sunset Fun Runs along the Gov. Froilan C. Tenorio Beach Road Pathway last Monday.

WORLD TOURISM DAY 2021

Bachani upset Shuji Kuroda after the Grandvrio Resort F&B assistant manager had to stop due to cramping. The Marianas High School student conquered the course—from the Minachom Atdao Pavilion at Kilili Beach Park to the Japanese Tank along Quartermaster Road and back—in a blistering time of 16.49. Tomas Abel came second in 16.57, while Kuroda settled for third in 17.20.

"I wasn't really expecting to win. I thought I was going to get third place. I think I picked up the pace at the end

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## Quarterfinals cast complete

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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The NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League 2021-2022 is down to eight teams, as pool play matches were completed last Monday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Making it to the quarterfinal round are Group A's Saipan International School (3-0-0 win-draw loss record), and San Vicente 1 (2-0-1); Group B's Koblerville ES 1 (3-0-0) and Garapan ES 2 (2-0-1); Group C's Garapan ES 1 (2-1-0) and San Vicente ES 2 (2-0-1); and Group D's Grace Christian Academy (3-0-0) and William S. Reyes ES 2 (2-0-1).

San Vicente 2 notched the second and last Round of 8 slot in Group C after outlasting WSR 1 (1-1-1), 6-5. Dyson Danis and Zuriel Abejo lifted San Vicente 2 to the close win after scoring three goals apiece with the former drilling the go-ahead in the 39th minute or one minute after Izaiah Tenorio hit the equalizer for WSR 1. Tenorio also nailed three goals for WSR 1, while Aldric Jon Antonio contributed two.

Still in Group C, Garapan 1 got the No. 1 spot in the pool play following a 9-0 rout of Mt. Carmel School. Jazzroy Villagomez and Evan Seguritan teamed up in Garapan 1's demolition of Mt. Carmel with the former logging six goals and the latter adding three.

In Group D, WSR 2 joined GCA in the quarterfinals after topping Kagman Elementary School, 6-2. Herman Villagomez powered WSR 2 to victory after recording five goals, while Hudson Igisomar posted the other goal for the Kingfishers. Raytheon Cruz and Zanthony Palacios

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grace Christian Academy's Mateo Angeles tries to keep control of the ball during an earlier game against William S. Reyes Elementary School 2 in the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League 2021-2022 last week at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

## 'ONOC impressed with sports venues'

By MARK RABAGO
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Officials from the Oceania National Olympic Committees and the Guam National Olympic Committee who were on island to conduct a workshop also toured the sports venues that will be used for the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022.

Mini Games organizing committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta said Oceania Sport Education Program Regional master educator Joey Miranda III, Oceania National Olympic Committees officer in charge/chief admin officer Meli Cavu, and ONOC chief communications officer Inoke Bainimarama came out impressed after visiting the venues for tennis, beach volleyball, va'a or outrigger canoe, and golf.

MARK RABAGO

Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 Organizing Committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta points to the Saipan lagoon during a site visit of the va'a or outrigger canoe venue last Sept. 10 near the 13 Fishermen Monument in Garapan. From left, Oceania National Olympic Committees Inoke Bainimarama, Babauta, ONOC officer in charge/chief admin officer Meli Cavu, and Northern Marianas Sports Association executive director Carli Sablan.

"Overall, they're impressed with all the venues and what the organizing committee has been doing to get ourselves ready for the Mini Games… They're confident that most of the facilities, especially those outside the [Oleai Sports Complex], will be ready."

For example, Babauta said the American Memorial Park tennis court will be resurfaced in the latter part of October and November. He added that they did a walk-through of the beach volleyball venue at Crowne Plaza Resort and that the place is just perfect for the sport.

"We are one of the few Mini Games hosts that actually have actual sand on the beach for beach volleyball," he said.

Babauta said Miranda, Cavu, and Bainimarama also had nice words to say about the Mini Games facilities for golf and va'a.

"We visited Coral Ocean Resort for golf and even the va'a location over at the Garapan shore line fronting J.P.

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